

The Philadelphia Art
Commission
Established 1911

Minutes

The Philadelphia Art Commission

September 19, 2022 - 9:30 a.m.

Remote – Zoom Meeting – Hosted by DPZ

Robert Roesch
Chair

José Almiñana
Deborah Cahill
Carmen Febo San Miguel
Matthew Kenyatta
Sarah McEneaney
Raed Nasser
Pepón Osorio
Mario Zacharjusz

C. Beige Berryman
Staff

Members Present: José Almiñana, Deborah Cahill, Carmen Febo San Miguel, Matthew Kenyatta, Raed Nasser, Sarah McEneaney, Pepón Osorio, Mario Zacharjusz, and Robert Roesch

Meeting of the Philadelphia Art Commission

Beige Berryman – staff member of the Art Commission – introduced the Zoom platform and remote Art Commission process, noting that the meeting is being recorded and those participating in the meeting are giving their consent to be recorded. A link to the recording, will be posted on the Art Commission website and the meeting agenda and materials can also be found on the website at: (<https://www.phila.gov/departments/philadelphia-art-commission/>).

*Ms. Berryman polled the commission via roll call announcing a quorum, then stated a few instructions for the public. Members of the public may comment on agenda items during the meeting. When the agenda item that you are interested in is being discussed, you can use the “raise hand” feature and staff will unmute you during the public comment period. If you’re joining by phone, you can also use the hand raise feature by dialing *9 during the public comment period.*

We have additional public comment instructions because pre-registration was available. If you pre-registered to speak, we will call on you during the general comment period in the order we received your request. Then we will proceed to those who did not register. If you submitted written comments in advance of today’s meeting, those have been shared with the commissioners.

Chair Roesch called the meeting to order at the minute mark (00:02:40). He reviewed the bifurcated meeting format for this special meeting. Today’s meeting will be for the presentation of the proposal by the Applicant followed by public comment. There will be no vote at today’s meeting. Rather the Commission’s deliberation and vote will occur at its next regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2022.

No public comment will be allowed at the 10/12/22 meeting. There will also be no further presentation by the Applicant at the 10/12/22 meeting. He also articulated that except for the comments provided by the representatives of the Japanese Association of Greater Philadelphia, (JAGP), all other commentators will be limited to 2 minutes and commentators will be asked to refrain from repetitious, duplicative testimony. Because JAGP speaks for many voices it will go first and will be given about 15-20 minutes for speaking.

Presentation for Final Review

1. 22-21

Philadelphia Peace Plaza, a.k.a. Statue of Peace 805 S Front Street

Review Type: Public art proposal

Project Details: Statue and associated plaza to commemorate the history of Comfort Women

Applicant: Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy

Presenter: Philadelphia Peace Plaza Committee

Marguerite Anglin from the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (OACCE) gave a brief overview of the proposal and the steps OACCE has taken thus far in reviewing the proposal including most recently a townhall meeting in February 2022 (00:04:55). The prior Art Commission concept review was mentioned (occurred in February of 2021) and letters of support were summarized. Public comments received were also briefly summarized. OACCE's support of the proposal was outlined, with the underrepresented topic and theme of the proposed art emphasized.

Next Shinjoo Cho, chair of the Philadelphia Peace Plaza Committee, presented the history of the project and community engagement thus far. The statement of intent for the proposal was reiterated.

Julie Snell continued the presentation with an outline of the plaza's design and landscape features. She described the tree health in the vicinity, the plaza design including benches, planting beds, sidewalk dimensions, and generally the inviting access and visibility of the plaza from the street. The informational plaque within one of the planting beds was described.

Shinjoo Cho presented again and described the Peace Plaza Committee's response to criticism, programming, and draft plaque text that was heard during the townhall meeting.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (00:48:32).

Commissioner Febo San Miguel suggested that the draft inscription statement be reconsidered to include broader language about the issue of violence against women. Shinjoo Cho agreed and emphasized that the current language was a draft.

Commissioner Nasser wondered if alternative ways to represent the issue could be considered, given the scrutiny that monuments are currently under around the nation. Shinjoo Cho described the programming and events that would occur at the site.

Commissioner Almiñana questioned the materiality of the benches, wondering how long wood would hold up over time. He suggested stone as a possible alternative and to consider any thematic reasons (comfort, texture, etc.) to reconsider the materials. Julie Snell mentioned the choices were still preliminary.

Commissioner Osorio asked if the signage would be in multiple languages. Other languages are being considered with access via technology such as QR codes.

Commissioner Kenyatta inquired about how the specific location engages with the theme of peace making, given the other war memorials that are nearby. He also asked for clarification about the “defense design” intention – benches and other plaza materials are being designed to discourage vandalism. He suggested that “bravery” and “reconciliation” might also be themes that could inspire design choices. A theme of “quiet contemplation” within a “humble” setting is being strived for by creating the plaza at this location.

Commissioner Cahill observed that the proposed plaza feels healing. She encouraged a maintenance manual be created that included plant material as well as hardscape material details. This was confirmed by Julie Snell.

Commissioner Zacharjasz inquired if the empty chair component of the sculpture is being designed structurally to withstand activity from visitors. Hot surface temperatures of the material were also brought up as a concern by several commissioners.

Questions and comments from the public.

Edward Mazurek, representative for the Japanese Association of Greater Philadelphia (JAGP), spoke in opposition of the proposal (01:11:56). He referenced protests that have occurred in association with similar Statue of Peace artworks in other locations and described the anti-Japan demonstrations. He also argued that the City of Philadelphia has no direct connection to the Comfort Women events, and therefore questioned the proposal’s compliance with Managing Director’s Office (MDO) Directive 67 that requires monuments to commemorate significant Philadelphia events, residents, geography, or themes.

Marguerite Anglin offered a brief rebuttal that the themes and values represented in the proposal are values that Philadelphia shares, and the issues are universal.

Randy Duque, from the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations, stated that no direct relationship between anti-Asian hate activity and these sculptures can be found in other locations where similar artworks exist.

Edward Mazurek then briefly responded to Ms. Anglin’s comments regarding the interpretation of MDO Directive 67.

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Questions from pre-registered public participants at the minute mark (01:40:00).

Tony Marano suggested the inscription text be revised.

Norman F. voiced opposition.

Brian Hoffman from the American Jewish Committee voiced opposition as the proposal does not encourage healing.

Andrew Demchick voiced opposition.

Takeshi Furumoto voiced opposition, asking not to divide communities in public space.

Makoto Funaki was not in support.

Chairperson Roesch then allowed time for Shinjoo Cho to offer responses to comments heard from the public thus far.

Shinjoo Cho stressed that Asia is not monolithic and the importance of confronting existing divisions. By ending the silence around these events, however uncomfortable that may be, healing may start.

Public comments resumed.

Tom Thompson supported rewording the plaque language.

Sung Sohn from San Francisco supported the proposal.

Ren Egawa was not in support.

Josh Onishi was not in support.

Helen Gym, Philadelphia City Council member, voiced support for the proposal.

Batame Hertzbach was in opposition.

Patrick Dailey was not in support.

HoJun Yu asked to move forward as a “global people.”

Kenji Yoshida was in opposition.

Nataly Jung-Hwa Han voiced support for the proposal.

Chairperson Roesch then gave a five-minute break.

After the short break, Shinjoo Cho responded to the prior public comments and reiterated the purpose of the Committee's work.

Public comments resumed.

Ed Kirlin from the Interstate Land Management Corporation (ILMAC) voiced support for the proposal and spoke about memorial maintenance, care, and expense.

Lee Woo Youn was not in support.

Kazumi Teune asked for the inscription to be revised.

Roya Taheri thought it was odd to single out one country.

Jim Curry voiced support for the proposal.

Arthur Gibbs voiced opposition because of the plaque language.

Margaret Schernecke voiced opposition.

Lorraine Gammon voice opposition.

Public comments from pre-registered people ended and comments from additional participants began (03:06:00).

Fox David asked the Commission to focus on the "big picture" issues.

Korea Verband voiced opposition.

Eleanor Ingersoll, Queen Village Neighborhood Association president, spoke to the multiple community meetings that have been held.

Shinjoo Cho responded about on-going efforts for peace making.

Eugene Desyqtnik thought there was an "identity crisis" of the statue.

"M" voiced support.

William Ruot voiced opposition.

Grace voiced support.

Shinjoo Cho summarized how challenging this topic is.

Seeing no further questions or comments, Chairperson Roesch closed the public comment period.

Questions and comments from the Commission at the minute mark (03:34:00).

Commissioner Nasser summarized the requests to modify the plaque text and to include multiple languages. Shinjoo Cho confirmed her understanding of this request for modification.

Seeing no further comments or questions, Chairperson Roesch and the Commission adjourned. This concluded the September 19, 2022, Philadelphia Art Commission Special Meeting.

The next Art Commission will be held Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Philadelphia Peace Plaza – Art Commission Special Meeting Public Comments received by Wednesday, September 14, 2022

Due to a very high level of interest and participation in the special meeting of the Art Commission held on Monday, September 19 2022, members of the public were given an opportunity to submit written comments to be appended to the meeting minutes following this meeting. As of the 4 pm September 14, 2022, deadline for advance public comment, staff of the Art Commission received seventeen written comments via email. Of those seventeen, four were in support of the proposal and thirteen were in opposition.

List of Commenters:

1. Ms. Mindy L. Kotler, Director, Asia Policy Point (support)
2. Susan Shore (oppose)
3. Shunichi Fujiki (oppose)
4. Toshie Marinov (oppose)
5. Tomomi Kinukawa, Ph.D. (support)
6. Grant Sobolewski (support)
7. Bill Lillis, President, and CEO of AGC Chemicals Americas (oppose)
8. Hidemi Nagao (sent in triplicate) – (oppose)
9. Takashi Mizuno (sent in duplicate) – (support)
10. Shusaku Tsuda (sent seven times) – (oppose)
11. Shin K-C (oppose)
12. Rachel Wright (oppose)
13. Kim Byunghoon, director of End Comfort Women Law (oppose)
14. End Comfort Women Fraud Co-chairs – (oppose)
15. Andrew E Bruner (oppose)
16. Hiroshi SANO (oppose)
17. Andrew L. Demchick, Director, Advancement & Engagement, AJC Philadelphia/SNJ, American Jewish Committee (AJC) – (oppose)

Full comments received, organized by date 9/14/2022

Ms. Mindy L. Kotler, Director, Asia Policy Point (support)

I write in support of the proposed Girl of Peace statue at Serenity Park (Philadelphia Peace Plaza). I am a scholar of Japan and advise policymakers in Washington, DC on the legacy of Japanese war crimes.

My first observation is that the statue's memorial plaque needs several corrections.

The proposed prose on the plaque is incorrect as it only mentions the Imperial Japanese Army as the perpetrators of the system of sexual slavery. It was the Japanese military, composed of the Army and the Navy, that managed the Comfort Women business. The Imperial Japanese Navy was equally involved in the trafficking of women for its sexual “needs.” In fact, they established the Comfort Women system in 1932. And frankly, Japanese colonial administrators and businessmen were also involved.

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Boys too were victims. And it is untrue that Comfort Women had no connection to the US. In addition to American women being among the many Western women (Dutch, Australian, French, British, German, and others) swept up in the system, there were survivors living in the US as well as family members of victims. It is unfortunate that this history of sexual violence is only told through the lens of the Korean victims. Throughout the Indo-Pacific there were victims; some were formally trafficked others were opportunities. No matter how the victims were acquired, the fact is that there was a state administered management system in which military officers were trained to set up "comfort stations."

I would also urge caution with believing purported anti-statue Korean or Japanese groups both in the U.S. and abroad. The barrage of emails and letters you are receiving are coordinated and backed by several ultra-rightwing, anti-Korean hate groups in Japan. The Comfort Women issue is used to encourage racial prejudice in Japan and nationalism by groups such as Nadeshiko Action, <http://nadesiko-action.org/> and the Society for the Dissemination of Historical Fact, <https://www.sdh-fact.com/>.

Exacerbating this is the Japanese government's policy to whitewash Japan's wartime past by revising previous statements acknowledging Japanese war responsibility, and discrediting and ridiculing the victims of wartime atrocities. Former Prime Ministers Abe and Suga as well as the current Prime Minister Kishida believe in denial history as part of their political platforms. Kishida recently had the audacity to ask the Chancellor of Germany to remove a Girl of Peace statue in Berlin, which is barely 50 miles from the infamous women's concentration camp of Ravensbruck.

The statue will not bring crowds or protests once installed. What it will do is remind people that sexual violence in wartime is not a norm and its victims deserve respect. Further, the statue is a recognized world-class sculpture of memorial art. In the city that hosts Robert Indiana's *LOVE* sculpture and Auguste Rodin's iconic *The Thinker*, the *Girl of Peace* is an important and worthy addition.

Here is a link to an op ed I wrote for *The New York Times* in 2014 entitled, "The Comfort Women and Japan's War on Truth": <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/15/opinion/comfort-women-and-japans-war-on-truth.html>

Susan Shore (oppose)

I am writing to state my opposition to the "comfort women" statue.

The comfort women story moved me, so I investigated it by reading historical documents, as well as books by historians, scholars, and researchers who talked with former comfort women. I was appalled to learn that some of the stories that we have been told about comfort women are inaccurate. Many well-meaning people have been deceived by the false narrative and have contributed to the spreading of the misinformation.

I am appending below a summary of comfort women history, based on scholars' research. Reading it will take only 5-10 minutes and will clarify several misconceptions.

Please vote "NO" on the statue.

THE TRAGEDY OF DISTORTED HISTORY

Many misconceptions surround the history of "comfort women." During World War 2, the Japanese military did some terrible things. But, the comfort women story is much more nuanced than the narrative that has been disseminated worldwide by activists and their supporters. Information on the internet is often misleading or

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inaccurate, having been penned by activists with agendas, or by individuals who were misinformed by such groups.

South Korean scholars, academicians, and researchers who have attempted to reveal the true facts on comfort women have been threatened, marginalized, and sued, resulting in the suppression of facts. But, without knowing the facts, how can there be justice?

The purpose of this brief summary is to shed light on this misunderstood subject. The history of comfort women is complex, and only an overview highlighting vital points is presented below.

First, it is important to understand the socioeconomic conditions at the time. During the first half of the last century, poverty was widespread in much of Asia, including Korea and Japan. Many families, especially farm families and those in rural areas, struggled to survive and were in debt, forcing families to make sacrifices unimaginable today. Hunger was commonplace. This stark economic reality, along with the patriarchal nature of Asian societies, created an environment where some young women desperately desired an opportunity for a different life. This backdrop provides the context needed to understand the events.

For Korean comfort women, the vast majority had been "sold" to brokers by their impoverished families or joined of their own accord; however, many may have been misled about the nature of the job by the brokers (recruiters/agents) who were typically civilians. Unscrupulous brokers took the women to brothels, instead of the stated job. These comfort women were paid (and/or their families had been paid) and could go home when their contractual obligations were met, but they were at the mercy of the civilian brothel operators. Korean comfort women often worked at brothels owned and operated by Korean civilians. The working and living conditions varied, depending on the brothel, and some brothel operators were abusive toward the women, as were some soldiers.

For these women, a reasonably accurate description is: Indentured prostitutes, working under contracts in civilian-owned brothels catering to the military, who could go home after fulfilling the contract, who had been sold by their parents or joined on their own, but who may have been recruited by civilian brokers under deceptive practices.

Although little mentioned, a large fraction of comfort women were from the Japanese main islands and were Japanese. This fact is ignored by most activists. Prostitution was legal in Japanese territories during that time. Korea and Taiwan were a part of Imperial Japan then.

In addition to the women recruited from Imperial Japan (e.g., Japan proper, Korea, and Taiwan), another group of women often classified under the umbrella label of comfort women were women that worked at brothels in lands Japan occupied during the war (e.g., China, Indonesia, Philippines). The Japanese military issued licenses to local owners for the establishment of brothel businesses that catered to the military. These businesses were staffed by women who were generally recruited by the civilian operators (not the military).

The Japanese military regulated these local businesses for the safety and welfare of both the soldiers and the women. For example, these regulations stipulated that the women must be paid (often at least half the amount that soldiers paid to visit) and undergo regular medical exams. Historical documents confirm that these brothels

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were privately owned and operated.

In addition to regulating brothels, the Japanese military was involved in establishing the brothel system ("comfort stations"), providing transportation for the brothel owners and the women, and upholding the contracts. Thus, the activists' claims that the Japanese military created the comfort women system and maintained it are accurate, but many of the other claims are misleading.

A small fraction of women were indeed forcibly recruited. Their circumstances varied. Newspapers of that time period reported that some Korean women were abducted by civilian (often Korean) traffickers and sent to brothels. In addition, there were incidents where some Japanese soldiers in the field coerced women, but this was not authorized by Tokyo; this occurred in territories occupied during the war, such as Indonesia and the Philippines. The women forced by rogue soldiers should be considered differently and separately from most comfort women. The women forcibly recruited in Indonesia were released after about two months by the Japanese military, when their situation was discovered by a higher ranking officer. The violating personnel were brought to justice after the war. Again, women coerced directly by soldiers were isolated cases.

Unfortunately, most activists and their supporters wrongly lump all comfort women into this "forced by the military" category.

As a policy, the Imperial Japanese military did not abduct women. Many Korean parents sold (and received payment for) the services of their children, placing them under a contract of servitude (i.e., they were "indentured"). The women could return home after fulfilling the contract. Parents and women may have been deceived by civilian brokers (many of whom were Korean) – not by the military. These conditions differ from "slavery" as understood by most Americans; thus, the term slavery creates misunderstanding.

With certainty, many comfort women suffered immensely as a result of being sold by their parents and/or being deceived by the civilian brokers. One can only imagine how traumatic and horrific it would be to be sold by one's own parents and placed under a contract of servitude because of extreme poverty, or deceived by unethical brokers who promised a good job. This is the true story that must be told to prevent future such tragedies.

A serious consequence of activists' spreading inaccurate history is that it harms girls and women of today by not shedding light on some underlying causes of this tragedy: socioeconomic inequality (i.e., patriarchal social structures and poverty). Solely blaming the Japanese military hides these underlying causes. To help today's disadvantaged girls and women from experiencing such a tragedy, the social and economic inequality that led to this tragedy must be highlighted, emphasized, and told.

Activists have used this real tragedy to push an inaccurate narrative to try to evoke outrage against Japan. Certain anti-Japan activist groups have recruited former comfort women and coached them to exaggerate their personal histories. Changes in testimonials over time are documented by researchers, such as S. Korean-born Professor C. Sarah Soh and others. Activists have found allies worldwide in politicians, journalists, authors, anti-Japan academicians, the United Nations, and others of influence. This exaggerated history is taught in S. Korea, so many Koreans believe the inaccurate claims.

In this summary, a highly-abridged overview of comfort women was presented, with many historical details

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omitted. Those who doubt the veracity of this summary or desire a more-detailed history should read the book by Korean-born Professor C. Sarah Soh, as well as books by U.S. Lt. Col. Archie Miyamoto, and Japanese Professor Hata Ikuhiko [Last name: Hata], all available in English (see below). Books by Korean professors Park Yu-ha and Lee Young-hoon (available in Korean and Japanese) further corroborate what is written here. Unfortunately, many websites, including Wikipedia, have been co-opted by activists and their supporters.

REFERENCES

US Office of War Information, Report No. 49, 1944:

<http://www.exordio.com/1939-1945/codex/Documentos/report-49-USA-orig.html>

Photocopy of this report:

http://www.sdh-fact.com/CL02_4/8_S1.pdf

Old Korean newspaper articles showing that Korean traffickers deceived women:

<http://scholarsinenglish.blogspot.com/2014/10/korean-newspaper-articles-from-1930s.html>

U.S. Lt. Col. Archie Miyamoto:

<https://www.amazon.com/Wartime-Military-Records-Comfort-Women-ebook/dp/B01NC0KEB4/>

Professor Hata Ikuhiko:

<https://www.amazon.com/Comfort-Women-Sex-Battle-Zone-ebook/dp/B07GRGZCRB/>

Links to Korean-born professors' books, other researchers, and historical documents:

Professor C. Sarah Soh:

<https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/C/bo6008209.html>

Professor Park Yu-ha [Last name: Park]:

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2118358/south-korean-professor-fined-book-about-comfort-women-proving>

<http://scholarsinenglish.blogspot.com/2014/10/summary-of-professor-park-yuhas-book.html>

Shunichi Fujiki (oppose)

I am writing this to prove why City of Philadelphia should not place the statue of comfort women in the public park after attending the Virtual Town Hall meeting.

Placing the so-called Comfort Woman Statue is not representing the sexually victimized women in the conflict but it is a form of Japan bashing based on their distorted education system which made people as cult religion. Also, it will be an additional cause of the division between Japanese American and Korean American in Philadelphia. If the innocent civilians read the inscription next to the statue, all of them will be misled by it.

We strongly oppose to place the controversial statue in the wonderful park in Philadelphia which is not an art but a seed to make division.

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City of Philadelphia should not involve to the conflict between Japan and Korea which the sole purpose is to bash Japan, demand money and to keep on press the head of Japan and Japanese people by intentionally distorted history.

Toshie Marinov (oppose)

I don't understand why the city of the city of Philadelphia is planning to install the so-called "Statue of Peace".

"This statue commemorates hundreds of thousands of girls and women from Asia, Oceania, and Europe who fell victim to the systemic sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army from 1931 to 1945. "

Based on this false statement, many Japanese children have been bullied at school. Not only children but also adults are targeted with verbal abuse. Of course, this non-physical abuse is never in the headlines of the news. Japanese people are quiet and don't want to make a big deal, they usually wait for the storm to stop. But the storm will never stop. Lauder voices are always heard.

So many groups and organizations are involved in the comfort women issues, including the installation of comfort woman statues. One of the former comfort women support groups has been reported to have close ties with North Korea. North Korea that abducted innocent Japanese citizens on numerous occasions, one of those cases was a 13-year-old Japanese girl who was abducted in 1977 and never came back to Japan. Her mother, who is 84 years old today is still waiting for her. Can you imagine your daughter or son is kidnapped and you will never see them again? Do you remember the story of Otto Warmbier?

According to the date I found, the Chinese population in Philadelphia in 2012-2014 was 32,688, Korean was 6,414. The Japanese were only 1,124. The population of Japanese is very small, almost non-existent. If the voice of the majorities matters, it is that of the Chinese and Koreans, not Japanese. Japanese will never be a majority. Are the Japanese people in Philadelphia to bow down to the majority forever?

The statue will only damage Japanese, particularly children. If the city of Philadelphia genuinely cares about justice for women, the project must be acceptable to both Japanese and Korean/Chinese communities, and the "peace statue" installation is not a project that can unite people.

Tomomi Kinukawa, Ph.D. (support)

I'm writing this email to express my wholehearted support for the "Statue of Peace" in the proposed Philadelphia Peace Plaza, commemorating victims and survivors of the Japanese military sexual slavery system, the so-called "Comfort Women" system, from the 1932-1945. (<https://www.phila.gov/2022-08-19-the-philadelphia-art-commission-welcomes-your-input-on-the-proposed-philadelphia-peace-plaza-a-k-a-statue-of-peace/>)

As a recent immigrant from Japan with both Korean and Japanese ancestries, I had a great honor to participate in building the "Comfort Women" memorial, the "Column of Strength," in San Francisco in 2017. The memorial commemorates courageous survivors, who spoke up against the Government of Japan, that continues to refuse legally-bound sincere apology and redress to the victims, denies the GOJ's accountability for the sexual, colonial, and genocidal violence and war-time crimes, and censors textbooks and media to silence and attack survivors, scholars, teachers, journalists, and community members, who seek justice. We, communities in the San

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San Francisco Bay Area from all walks of our lives, united to seek justice and stand in solidarity with the courageous survivors. We were especially inspired by Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin Americans, who have sought redress from the US Government for injustices that they experienced during WWII. We also worked closely with communities based in Japan, who are also seeking justice and demanding the GOJ's apology and redress. In response to our communal work, however, the far right GOJ and their sympathizers attacked us, alleging that we are anti-Japan. A small group of new immigrants from Japan, who are mostly members of fringe far-right cult organizations such as Happy Science, attempted to spread completely unfounded rumors that our memorial provokes hate against Japanese Americans, including Japanese school children.

Our supervisors and art commissioners in San Francisco, however, firmly stood on the side of justice and supported our memorial. And I ask Philadelphia to do the same.

It is also reported that leaders of the American Jewish Committee wrote to the city recommending against the monument. AJC regional director Marcia Bronstein is quoted to have stated that "We think it would be divisive and create conflict." As our colleagues from Jewish Voice for Peace and others have pointed out, however, AJC, along with other pro-Israel lobby organizations, has a history of opportunistically colluding with far-right governments and organizations, that provoke racial hatred, including anti-Semitism and anti-Asian hatred, and has alleged that all criticisms of Israel's colonial and genocidal violence against Palestinians are "anti-Semitic." AJC also awarded the far-right former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who consistently provoked racial hatred against Koreans and other people of color throughout his term. Now AJC is silencing courageous "Comfort Women" survivors just like they have attempted to silence Palestinians, while providing impunity to both Japan and Israel for their colonial aggressions and crimes.

As Martin Luther King, Jr., famously stated "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." The proposed "Statue of Peace" embodies the spirit of indivisibility of justice. I ask Philadelphia to stand firmly with communities that are united to demand justice.

Grant Sobolewski (support)

I want to express my support for the proposed Philadelphia Peace Plaza (Statue of Peace).

The statue symbolizes woman's struggle against sexual violence and will educate the public about the use of sexual violence as an instrument of war.

That is a crime against humanity and countries that use it need to be held accountable!

I urge you to please vote in favor of the Peace Plaza and Statue of Peace!

Thank you!

Bill Lillis, President, and CEO of AGC Chemicals Americas (oppose)

My name is Bill Lillis and I serve as the President and CEO of AGC Chemicals Americas. AGC Chemicals Americas is part of the AGC Group which is a large global company headquartered in Tokyo, Japan with over 50,000 employees around the world. In the Philadelphia area, AGC Chemicals Americas has two business locations with almost 150 employees based in this area. Personally, I have lived and worked in the Greater Philadelphia area most of my life. I also serve as a Board Member of the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia for the last 3 years.

As an executive of a Japanese subsidiary based in the Philadelphia area, I know Philadelphia has an international reputation for being a very welcoming city. In addition to employing ex-pats from Japan at our Philadelphia

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locations, we also often host visitors from our parent company. Our company is very proud to employ a diverse and inclusive workforce. I also take great pride representing Philadelphia when I travel overseas in my role.

I admit that when I first heard about it, I was not very knowledgeable about the significance of the statue of peace which is being proposed by the Philadelphia Peace Plaza Committee. I now understand how this statue is viewed by many as a symbol of a longstanding political dispute between South Korea and Japan over the regrettable treatment of the “comfort women” by the Japanese Imperial Army in Asia during WWII. Speaking to colleagues from Japan, I’ve become educated to their viewpoint that it is a political statue which seeks to vilify Japan for these wrongdoings and continues to seek restitution and apologies from Japan for what was done.

If the statue were to be approved and built on public land, I’m certain Philadelphia will get attention (particularly in Japan and South Korea). In today’s connected world such news is easily distributed. We’ve seen around our country the kind of emotion a statue can stir up. I don’t believe the city of Philadelphia should risk such stoking such emotions. Knowing what I know now, I would find it difficult to explain to my colleagues from Japan why the City of Philadelphia choose to allow such a symbol to be erected given its political message.

Sexual victimization is a reprehensible crime and should never be tolerated anywhere at any time. Therefore, I would add my support in asking the Philadelphia Art Commission to adopt the JASGP proposal and ask both supporters and opponents of the statue to develop a universally acceptable and representative statue or other artwork which truly reflects ALL Philadelphians’ denouncement of sexual abuse and oppression of women and girls in ALL countries and cultures. Only by recognizing the universality of this issue can the City of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Art Commission say that you support a statue which truly, “enhances the public realm” and is “in the interests of ALL people.”

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter

Hidemi Nagao (x3) – (oppose)

I pay my highest respect to the Philadelphia Art Commission for soliciting opinions on the Proposed Philadelphia Peace Plaza (a.k.a. Statue of Peace).

I question the propriety of setting up the statue at a municipal park. And I would like to present five points to oppose it.

1. Will Philadelphia, the Athens of America, be comfortable of having someone or some group forcing them to accept the statue that relates to prostitution?
2. Will Philadelphia dignity and prestige be promoted by the statue that is fictional and parasitic in origin?
3. Will the Philadelphia education authority, including historians, be comfortable of having the statue that has been historically and politically controversial even in South Korea for more than a decade until now?
4. Will the Philadelphia teachers be comfortable of providing the class with unilateral claims as fact and truth?
5. Will the Philadelphia parents be comfortable of teaching their youngsters whether or not trading sex for money or personal favor is justifiable?

I thank the commission for taking time to read my opinion, hoping the Liberty Bell sound as it should.

9/13/2022

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Takashi Mizuno (x2) – (support)

I have been a resident in California since 2013. I lived in Cinnaminson in New Jersey just across Philadelphia over the Delaware River for 23 years since 1990 when I moved from Japan with my American wife and two biracial children.

I sent a letter to an Art Commission in San Francisco to support the setting up of a Comfort Women Memorial in the City in 2016.

I am writing this time to support the setting up of a Statue of Peace in Philadelphia where I was familiar with the place and the people. Let me explain the main reason why I support it.

My late father was a pharmacist in the Japanese Imperial Army during the Asia and Pacific War. I grew up without knowing what atrocities the Japanese military had committed against the people in Asia and the Pacific islands until I lived and worked in Malaysia in the late 1970's. I started to learn about it more and more after I returned to Japan and befriended with Asinas and the Pacific Islanders since 1980's.

I have been aware that some people in the Japanese American and Japanese communities in the US and Europe have strongly opposed the setting up Comfort Women Memorials in public places mainly because they have argued that it would cause divisions among Asians. I have had a different view. I believe that it would bring a symbol of healing and education based on the truth for both the victims and the perpetrators for generations to come. It would also show a good example for other racial and ethnic peoples.

Shusaku Tsuda (x7) – (oppose)

Comfort women are prostitutes. Primary source research has revealed that comfort women are prostitutes. Attached is the URL of paper "Comfort Women : The North Korean Connection" by Prof. Ramseyer and Prof. Tetsuo Arima. Based on primary sources, not a single scholar can refute "Comfort Women : The North Korean Connection". You should hold a public debate and reveal the truth of the comfort women issue. The creator of the comfort women statue modeled his 11-year-old daughter on the statue. As a result of research on primary sources, we know that the comfort women are over 17 years old. He is full of malice. Anyway, please read "Comfort Women : The North Korean Connection". And please understand the truth of the comfort women issue.

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4185081

Best regards.

Shin K-C (oppose)

As a scholar, I am writing again to voice deep concerns about the so-called "Statue of Peace," proposed by activists and their confederates. Here, I will again delineate reasons why the statue should be declined.

Several Korean scholars have exposed that certain Korean activists, politicians, and others (even some journalists) have been disseminating misleading accusations about Japan to foment anti-Japan sentiment worldwide.

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Professor Lee Young-hoon et al. conducted extensive research into comfort women history, and found that many of the claims about comfort women are misrepresentations, exaggerations, or even fabrications:

<https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/09/article/korean-authors-bombshell-on-wartime-japan/>

Scholars in S. Korea who attempt to reveal the facts (which demonstrate that many of the activists' claims are misleading) have been demonized. For example, Professor Park Yu-ha, who interviewed many former comfort women, was sued, in an attempt to silence her:

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2118358/south-korean-professor-fined-book-about-comfort-women-proving>

https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/19/world/asia/south-korea-comfort-women-park-yu-ha.html?smid=tw-nytimes&smtyp=cur&_r=1

Professor C. Sarah Soh, who also interviewed former comfort women, noted that some former Korean comfort women changed their testimonials, after they were recruited by activists, in order to vilify Japan:

<https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/C/bo6008209.html>

If this statue (that is based on half-truths) is erected, it will be a disservice to the community, and the antithesis of truth and justice. Eventually, the truth shall win out. Should this misguided statue be placed and require removal later, it will be a great embarrassment to the city and those on the Art Commission who supported it.

As your time is valuable, I will end here (but I may write again and provide further reasons why this statue is inappropriate for Philadelphia).

9/12/2022

Rachel Wright (oppose)

As someone who seeks justice, I was disturbed to hear that the comfort women statue is still under consideration.

As I wrote previously, S. Korean soldiers committed heinous atrocities during the Vietnam War! Thousands of Vietnamese civilians were raped, massacred, and victimized by S. Korean forces!!!

Korean activists hide these facts while pointing fingers at another country. It is hypocritical and unfair.

Please look up "LAI DAI HAN" -- These are mixed Korean-Vietnamese children who were abandoned by their Korean fathers during the war.

Please reject the Korean-sponsored statue. Thank you so much.

SEE THE EVIDENCE:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/vietnam-war-women-seek-justice-mothers-raped-south-korean-soldiers-war-untold-stories-a7940846.html>

<http://www.newsweek.com/south-koreas-vietnam-157627>

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<http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/UA0700>

*** WARNING: GRAPHIC IMAGES below ***

http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000023943

<http://legacy.h21.hani.co.kr/section-021003000/2000/021003000200011150334051.html>

<http://legacy.h21.hani.co.kr/section-021005000/2001/04/021005000200104240356037.html>

Kim Byuncheon, director of End Comfort Women Law (oppose)

Discontinue immediately the Philadelphia Korean American Association's vicious attempt to build a Statue of Peace Plaza!

In June 2021, the committee for the Girl Statue Plaza of the Philadelphia Korean American Association made public a project to add a Statue of Peace Plaza at a site of the park in Queen Village, Philadelphia, according to the Internet Journal published in South Korea. Since then, the committee began to coordinate with the city hall and solicit donations from the local residents. The city hall will hold briefing and hearing sessions on February 9, in response to a request submitted by the committee to construct the plaza. The statue of a girl will be designed by the couple Kim Seo-kyung and Kim Eun-sung as is often the case with similar statues erected both in South Korea and other parts of the world.

The Girl Statue is, however, nothing but the willful misunderstanding of the comfort women issue and the wrongful anti-Japanese hostility espoused by sculptor Kim Seo-kyung. Regarding his note titled "A Promise Engraved on the Empty Bench," Mr. Kim wrote, "During the days of the annexation of Korea by Japan, innocent Korean girls and young women were deceived or kidnapped to warfront to be made sexual slaves. In some cases, they were killed. What I did by designing the statue was for a cause to hand down the hideous acts in history." Truth is the statue is the product of no more than distorted historical facts and unfounded hatred.

Though the sculptor claims the Japanese military forcefully conscripted the Korean girls, the Japanese military, in any capacity, had not made them subjected to any mobilization during the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. The Japanese troops were public servants and, therefore, had to follow laws and regulations. There was no law or regulation to mobilize comfort women. It must be noted that an official duty required an official order to carry out. In the absence of such a duty or order, no one could take the women out to warfront. It is the private managers who, in reality, employed for money the comfort women. In other words, there was No Conscription of Comfort Women in those days, period.

South Koreans, expatriates or not, also claim the comfort women were sexual slaves for the troops. This is another false claim. Fact is that the troops paid money according to their rank to the comfort station manager, that each of them was given a certain time to be with a comfort woman, and that comfort women earned money for their sexual service. The women engaged in prostitution as profession were not sexual slaves.

Were the comfort women victims of war crime? No! The McDougall Report of 1998 submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Commission states, in part, war crimes are defined as one nation's troops committing kidnapping, raping, and murdering women of an adversary nation during an international conflict or an armed

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clash. Korea and Japan were not hostile with each other then. Korean women, as well as Korean men, were Japanese nationals. The comfort stations were provided for troops so as not to rape women in the occupied areas. The stations were legal entities, not to mention the official contracts the station managers and comfort women signed with each other. Those women should not be regarded as the victims of war crimes.

The sculptor Kim Seo-kyung, while visualizing the statue as a teenage girl who had been deceived and kidnapped by the Japanese military to warfront, asked his 11-year-old daughter to model for it. His idea is wrong in that a woman had to sign a contract with a prostitution agent, obtain a permit from police, present herself at the police division of a Japanese consulate. Each woman who had to follow those procedures must also present a letter of consent from her father or legal custodian, a copy of her family register, a certificate of the family seal, a written request for permission to do business, a certificate of a business investigation result, and two photographs. Upon completion of those stringent procedures, one could officially work at a comfort station. No one could evade them. Besides, women who chose to engage in prostitution had to be 17 years old at least.

As stated above, numerous girl statues erected in South Korea and other overseas locations carry the message based on willfully distorted disinformation about the comfort women. The plate attached to the girl statue states it is a peace statue. Has it been contributing to peace in real world? No, it has not. It merely symbolizes fabrication of facts and unsolicited hatred. It, in fact, aggravates the South Korean-Japanese relations each time another statue is built.

The nature of the comfort women issue involving the Japanese military boils down to poverty, period. Most of the cases in which prostitution was chosen as a profession point to poor and/or bankrupt families. In some cases, young women volunteered to ease up financial troubles those families had to face. In other cases, their parents took advantage of the daughters to get extra money. Those difficult situations forced the women to go through shameful and sorrowful experiences in her early life. It certainly raises an alarm over their condition as a historical lesson. It should not be used, however, as an easy tool to help anti-Japanese campaigns.

Since South Korea was established in 1948, some anti-Japanese people have been abetting campaigns to discredit Japan and creating a great chasm between the nation and Japan. No one can estimate how much loss those activities and opinions have brought about over the healthy bilateral relations. Its pecuniary loss might amount to several hundred trillion won. The issues of the comfort women and the conscripted Korean laborers have twisted the bilateral relations despite what the international laws and regulations dictate. Erecting another statue in Queen Village will add fuel to the fire already burning. Would the conscientious citizens feel comfortable about what it entails?

We rightfully hope the Philadelphia Korean American Association to immediately and righteously rescind the project to build the Statue of Peace Plaza. We also hope the Philadelphia citizens sincerely and seriously make efforts not to further hurt the healthy South Korean-Japanese-American relations.

9/11/2022

End Comfort Women Fraud Co-chairs – (oppose)

Joo Oksoon (President, Mothers Unit and Broadcast)

Kim Byungheon (Director, Korean History Textbook Research Institute)

Lee Woo Youn (Researcher, Naksungdae Institute of Economic Research)

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Low Seok Choon(Retired Professor, Yonsei University Sociology Department)

Since 2019, our civic group "End Comfort Women Fraud" has been protesting against the Korea Council and the 'Statue of Peace' erected by them in the Jong-no district in Seoul, South Korea. And just last month, our organization traveled to Mitte, Berlin, to demand Korea Verband cease its perpetual lies on the issue of comfort women.

We write this letter to call your attention to the malicious falsehood propagated by the Statue of Peace on a historical dispute between Seoul and Tokyo, which harvests antagonism among Koreans and the international community vis-à-vis Japan.

The issue of comfort women began on August 14, 1991, when an alleged former comfort woman named Kim Hak-sun publicly declared that the Japanese military abducted young girls, coerced them into sexual slavery, and even murdered them in extreme cases. Despite her shocking testimony, historical evidence suggests otherwise. The Japanese military was in no position to draft Chosun women by brute force and was not capable of committing war crimes such as rape and murder against them. Indeed, no single legitimate proof exists to this day to corroborate Kim's statements.

Comfort stations were, in fact, established and operated to prevent war crimes in occupied territories. Likewise, they were sex workers who obtained business licenses and signed employment contracts with the station owners. Most of their customers were Japanese soldiers; thus, many posted their Japanese stage names on the front door to attract more visitors. This alone indicates that they were professionals in the wartime sex industry, not sex slaves.

The Japanese servicemen were required to pay a fixed price and follow service hours set according to the comfort station regulations. Comfort women received a specified portion of the payment, which was then divided between the housemasters. Some women earned substantial income that they could afford jewelry like rubies, jade, and diamonds, while others sent living expenses or educational fees for their families back home.

As you may know, the first Statue of Peace was installed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul by the Korea Council to commemorate their 1000th 'Wednesday rallies.' The organization and many ordinary Koreans continue to hold demonstrations at this site, demanding Japan atone and compensate for its wartime crimes. Since its initial erection in 2011, 150 statues have been installed across South Korea, with 34 more exported overseas. Nowhere in the world would one find such a relentless proliferation of identical memorials aside from Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il monuments in North Korea.

In addition, the statue epitomizes sculptors Kim Seo-kyung and Kim Eun-sung's misguided views on the history of comfort women and their anti-Japanese sentiment. The sculptors write in their memoir: "Budding Chosun girls and young women were forced or deceived into becoming sex slaves in the battleground and even murdered on certain occasions." No historical records from WWII point to such merciless crimes being committed by the Japanese military against these women.

The sculptors further suggest that their eleven-year-old daughter was used as a model to depict victims of the comfort women in their early teens. According to research, comfort women were, on average, 25, and military

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comfort women and regular sex workers had to be above the legal age of 17. The historical views adhered to by the two sculptors are unsubstantiated and false.

Finally, while the Statue of Peace purports to symbolize peace, it frankly delivers more division and stirs hostility towards contemporary Japan and the Japanese people. We fear this could escalate the diplomatic animosity between Seoul and Tokyo and sabotage the robust security and economic ties with our traditional allies, including the United States. More crucially, however, preserving such a statue in a public area may generate an unwarranted contempt against the Japanese immigrants residing in Philadelphia.

In 2018, under President Duterte's watch, the Philippines dismantled its 'Filipina Comfort Women' statue to avoid damaging bilateral relations with Japan. Similarly, in July 2021, the city council in Aurora, Colorado, voted against a proposal to build the Peace Statue on public property. The councilors opined that the local park was "not compatible" with a sculpture symbolizing an "unresolved dispute between two foreign states." In the said examples, the governments were persuaded not to take sides on this intensely politicized, unresolved issue. The people should freely debate it and come to their own judgment without the state's intervention.

In the light of these facts, we respectfully ask the Philadelphia City Council and the Art Commission to vote against the establishment of the Peace Plaza.

9/10/2022

Andrew E Bruner (oppose)

Dear members of the Arts Commission and concerned citizens, like most attending this meeting today, I am a proud resident of Philadelphia. And indeed, like some of you, I am also a homeowner in Queen Village. Yet, like few of you, I actually live directly across the street from Serenity Park. So I can personally attest to its daily life cycles, it's myriad of seasonal changes, and it's importance in the local community.

I hope you take pause and appreciate this. And I hope these words are not lost to the committee...

At its heart, Serenity Park is a residential park. Because of its small size, it's often even referred to as a 'pocket park.' Historically, it was built out of the resilience of people forced to contend with I-95's destructive incursion, and I think all would agree, it has matured into a unique solitary space set among our quiet residential community. Canopied by the mature foliage of river birch, silver maple, and dog wood trees, it provides respite for kids and adults alike on hot summer days, an enveloping natural contrast to the overshadowing highway. Kids are often biking, scooting, and playing catch within its space. Adults can be seen resting on its bench, and amongst its shade. The light rays of dawn and dusk illuminate its branches like few other areas in this part of town. And evening brings on an appreciated darkening that contrasts the overabundance of street lighting.

Considering this, I am disheartened that Philadelphia may simply abandon this unique space. This current proposal has removal of the entire central section of trees, installation of "artful lighting", reduction of usable space, and elimination of vast amounts of pedestrian shade, and this all to erect an undistinguished, politically sensitive reproduction with no connection to Queen Village, or Philadelphia itself.

Political agendas certainly have a TIME and PLACE for promotion. However, if others outside our local community want to acquire space for such memorials and 'large' political gatherings, let them look elsewhere.

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A pocket park by definition shouldn't be designed for such things. And it is the antithesis of what Queen Village residents WANT or NEED.

Declining this proposal does NOT negate the promoters cause. It simply allows them to find a venue that is actually appropriate.

Please do NOT force this on Queen Village. We take pride in our quiet residential neighborhood. We cherish our natural spaces. Keep the park and ALL its trees. It has taken 60 years to mature. Let it continue to grow.

Keep Serenity Park serene.

9/5/2022

Hiroshi SANO (oppose)

Regarding so called "comfort women" and/or "sexual slavery by Japanese army"

I am sending this email from Japan. I heard that Philadelphia city is planning to set Statue of Peace in order to remember above wrongdoing by Japanese army.

Not only this issue Korean government and Korean people accuse Japan not based on real history but on fake history so many times. Conscientious people cannot believe such thing, but it is what going on now. Comfort women story is one of such fake history. As same as many other troops in long human history, during world war 2 Japanese army also had brothels near their battlefield and there are many prostitutes in the place. Most of the prostitutes were from Japan but there were also prostitutes from Korea, Taiwan and other area. Such prostitutes from outside of main Japanese land were fetched by private agents, not by army, and most of them were sold by their parents because of poverty, this background was also same in case of Japanese prostitutes. The place near battlefield was dangerous so those prostitutes got very high pay and there was no discrimination and distinction between mainland Japanese and people from other area. So they were not slaves but just prostitutes.

The history explained by Korean people is not real so Philadelphia city should reject to set the statue.

Please see an essay bellow written by J.M Ramseyer from Harvard and T Arima from Wased Univ. in Japan. This essay explains details of the story which I mention.

<https://ssrn.com/abstract=4185081>

8/25/2022

Andrew L. Demchick , Director, Advancement & Engagement, AJC Philadelphia/SNJ, American Jewish Committee (AJC) - (oppose)

I am Andrew Demchick, Advancement and Engagement Director of American Jewish Committee, a global advocacy organization with 24 US regional offices - 14 international offices and 36 global partnerships, speaking on behalf of Regional Director Marcia Bronstein. I am here to express deep concerns about erecting the proposed comfort woman statue.

AJC is not opposed to memorializing atrocities from World War II we simply believe this statue does more harm rather than good and is being erected with a political motivation rather than any communal intent for healing.

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The complicated reality with the proposed sculpture warrants insight and research into the pre- and post-war relationships between South Korea and Japan. Both countries have been in dialogue and negotiations on the issues of occupation and wartime atrocities for decades. These issues are difficult, and frequently politicized.

Japan and South Korea are key strategic allies of the U.S. and the U.S. position is that it behooves all to move forward in the spirit of friendship and reconciliation. The statue would move both countries towards division and strife rather than understanding and healing.

The Jewish community understands historical injustices: the pain, the grief, and the need to preserve memory and educate new generations. We are aware of the significance of appropriate memorialization. After the Holocaust, AJC was the first non-governmental Jewish organization to enter Germany to rebuild and provide support. It was painstaking work, but necessary for relations to flourish and for hate to be eradicated. Words, actions, and memorials matter. They need to be built with care and attention to the message.

We applaud addressing women's rights and human dignity in a public art, but this statue is more a political statement than a memorial; it will intensify tensions that threaten the very recent improvement of bilateral relations between Japan and South Korea; relations that are critical to U.S. interests.

The new governments are trying to work in harmony and shared purpose. The sculpture is an incitement that could derail those relations and have negative repercussions on American security interests in the region.

By rejecting a divisive instillation, Philadelphia, sends a clear message that prejudice, and racial intolerance are not condoned in our city.

Comments Received via Online Submission Form

List of Commenters:

1. Anonymous (x 44 distinct comments)
2. Tony Marano
3. Lisa
4. Yumiko Yamamoto
5. Kenny Kugai
6. Neeta Patel, Interim Executive Director, Asian Americans United
7. Yuriko Grenda
8. Dr. Elisheva A. Perelman
9. Eugene Desyatnik
10. Nataly J.H. Han - Chairwomen of Korea Verband in Berlin/ Germany
11. Judge Lillian Sing, ret.
12. Judith Mirkinson, President, ""Comfort Women"" Justice Coalition"
13. (Japanese language submission)
14. Margaret Scherneck
15. Roya Taheri (x3)

Full Comments (In the order they were received; minor spelling and grammar edits only):

Tony Marano

1 - Between 1910 to 1945 average population of Korea was around 20 million. Koreans claim around 200,000 of their women forced to be sex slaves (Comfort Women) for the Japanese military. Today's numbers using the USA as an example represents around 3 million American women. Can you image 3 million American women being dragged off to be Comfort Women what the reaction would be from American men?

2 - Where were the Korean men while 200,000 of their women were being dragged off? They were in line to join the Japanese Imperial Army. Nearly 800,000 Korean men attempted to join while only 17,644 got accepted. Would these 800,000 volunteers to join an army responsible for forcing 200,000 of their women into sexual slavery?

3 - Former president of South Korea, President Park Geun-hye, her father Park Chung-hee served in the Japanese Imperial Army as a distinguished officer. Would he join an army responsible for forcing 200,000 of his fellow citizens into sexual slavery? He later became President of South Korea.

4 - In 1944 some Comfort Women were captured by the United States Army. The USA Army issued a report after interrogating the women. The report states they were "well-paid prostitutes." Also states they enjoyed social events such as picnics, dances, sporting events with members of the Japanese Imperial Army. Do sex slaves get to do that? They also enjoyed shopping trips spending their earnings.

5 - During the Vietnam War, the South Korean Army served in Vietnam along with the USA. The South Korean Army forced Vietnamese women into becoming their Comfort Women. The term for these unfortunate women "Lai Dai Han." Will these women be included in the inscription to be added next to the proposed statue in Philadelphia?

Lisa

I hope you will agree to install the Statue of Peace. It is important for such statues to exist so the horrors of the past are not forgotten. Just as we can have Holocaust memorials without causing hatred of German people, we can have this statue without causing harm to present-day Japanese people who had nothing to do with the crimes remembered by the statue. Thank you.

Yumiko Yamamoto

I am strongly against the proposed statue.

I spoke the following statement" Does animosity promote peace?" at the UN human rights council.

These are happening to the children where the comfort women statues are erected.

Do you really want these to happen to the children in your city?

If you want peace and art in the public property, chose something different which brings happiness and joy to the children not the "comfort women statue."

"Does animosity promote peace?"

In the USA, a little girl says, "Mom, why do my classmates hate me?" Japanese students are bullied at school.

In Germany, a student is insulted because his grandparents are Japanese.

In the Republic of Korea, a boy says to his Japanese mother, "Don't come to my school. ""

What is going on in the world?

Korean groups have been building "peace statues" both at home and abroad.

There are already more than140 of them and some are in the USA, Canada, Germany, and in Australia.

What does the statue stand for?

It is meant to symbolize hundreds of thousands of Korean women who were sexually enslaved as comfort women by the Japanese military during wartime.

Were they sexual slaves?

No, they were not. In fact, they were paid prostitutes who signed contracts with brothel owners.

Why do they keep building the statues?

Because they cannot accept what wrongs their ancestors had done for their daughters.

It is a state sponsored hate campaign.

Now, another one is going to be built in Philadelphia.

We sincerely ask this Council member states not to build one in your city.

We hope everyone in future generations to live NOT with animosity BUT with pride and wisdom.

[UN WEB TV]

Item:4 General Debate (Cont'd) - 40th meeting,

49th Regular Session of Human Rights Council

Date : 22 Mar 2022, Place: Geneva

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1g/k1ggzvygkx?kalturaStartTime=3770>

Thank you very much.

Anonymous

I am commenting from Japan.

As you probably already know, this statue of a young girl is originally a statue of the artist's daughter and her friend who were killed in a car accident caused by a US military vehicle. The friend part is unfinished. Anti-

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Japanese groups in South Korea have been installing them around the country as idols to extort money from Japan. North Korea and North Korean agents are behind the anti-Japanese groups. These are not statues of peace, but of blackmail. This is one of the reasons why Japan and Korea cannot get along. In the first place, they were not sex slaves as claimed by Korea, but professional women for sexual services. This was set up by the private sector to prevent soldiers from attacking civilians in war zones because of their sexual urges. Instead of allowing the business to operate, the military issued notices to the proprietors to take care of the health and treatment of the women. Please do not ever install statues in your city for this kind of intimidation.

Anonymous

This is a statue of a comfort woman, an imaginary statue created by South Korea to discredit Japan. If this statue is installed, most Japanese will no longer visit Philadelphia, and friendly exchanges will no longer be possible.

The U.S. side has already admitted that the comfort women were fabricated by the Korean media, and there will be no benefit from installing this statue.

In the past, there was an article in the Japanese Korean and Chinese media that acknowledged the comfort women statue, but the article has now been corrected in Japan.

We hope that Philadelphia will remain neutral (no statue) and not be misled by this kind of half-Japanese Korean propaganda.

Anonymous

I must say that there is absolutely no historical evidence that represents the meaning of the statue. At the present time, the newspaper article was proved to be a fake article and the newspaper company apologized for publishing the fake article officially.

Anonymous

I oppose the installation of comfort women statues. This is because the history is propaganda by South Korea, and when a Seoul National University professor confirmed with the self-proclaimed victim, he testified that the situation at the time the victim claimed had changed over and over, and it could not be recognized that the facts were being announced. . We oppose the installation of comfort women statues because under criminal law, if there is no objective evidence and the credibility of the confession is low, the person is presumed innocent.

Anonymous

Koreans really just want to make Japanese people look bad, and now they want to talk about the 70-year-old comfort women issue in order to humiliate the Japanese people. We in the U.S. should not have any conflicts between the Japanese and Koreans. We don't need the comfort women statue to live together in America.

Anonymous

It is not good idea to build the statue. As Ramseyer, the professor of Harvard University wrote in his essay. "The Comfort Women: North Korean Connection", the North Korea concocted Sex Slave Story, to divide Japan and Korea. Even Korean Scholars agreed that Ramseyer is right. Please read the following article.

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4185081

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they were just prostitutes.
see below.
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=4185081>

Anonymous

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4185081
please read this url site
this is totally Korean propaganda

Anonymous

Do not believe South Korea's commercial lies.
Japanese people are very annoyed.
Koreans are fabricating history and plotting to become victims of lies.
Never believe the lies that seek to humiliate the Japanese people.
It is really annoying.
I trust in the goodwill and education of the people of Philadelphia.

Kenny Kugai

Bronze statues of gratuitous propaganda have been erected across America and Europe. They act like tragic heroes and try to get your sympathy. They are South Koreans from North Korea and South Koreans manipulated by North Korea who want money. 70 or 80 years ago, at that time, there was a wartime sex trade. This is not just a problem for Japan, it was adopted by countries around the world. Prostitution was not promoted by Japan as a nation, but was carried out by private companies to make money. Many of those traders were Koreans. They may have adopted poor Korean girls from their parents with money. But many were women who sold their bodies for money. And most of them were Japanese women. The Japanese woman will never sue the Japanese government. Because she was not coerced by the Japanese government, it was a self-responsible occupation for money. Find out how many false histories are being told by the Korean groups that have made or are trying to make the girl statue. let the American people know the truth. And don't instill a false history in Japanese children studying in America. I hope that righteous Americans know the true history of Japan and South Korea and don't be deceived by lies. I hope that the fake history made by Koreans and the statues of girls all over America will be removed soon.

Anonymous

I strongly oppose the installation of comfort women statues. There is no fact that the Japan military forcibly took away comfort women. Facts have been twisted and fabricated throughout history. The details have already been proven by historians in papers and books. There are also books that have been empirically verified by Korean researchers. (Anti-Japanese Tribalism, Lee Rong-kao) The act of ignoring the facts and installing comfort women statues and spreading a false impression is extremely sinful, an act of insulting the Japan people, and an act that worsens relations between the two countries. You can't lie to history. I have a strong desire to make the right choice

Anonymous

oppose

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Anonymous

I support Philadelphia Peace Plaza. The establishment of this statue park will be another precious symbol for awareness and improvement of women's rights.

Anonymous

I oppose the installation of comfort women statues.

Anonymous

There is no fact that there were over 20 thousand sex slaves in WW2. Refer the article, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4185081
When the statue is built, it must be a shame of false in Philadelphia for a long time.

Anonymous

I simply do not see how this a positive for our neighborhood. I am in no way making light of what happened but we all know the horrors of war. The park as it is now is a perfect little respite while taking a stroll in our neighborhood. Let's keep it that way.

Anonymous

I do NOT support the proposed placement of the "Statue of Peace" in Serenity Park in Queen Village, nor do I support the proposed name change to "Peace Park Plaza". This statue is not art, it has no connection to the Queen Village neighborhood, the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or The United States of America.

Queen Village is our family home. We have raised our two young children here and planned to stay for the rest of our lives. We live directly across the street from Serenity Park. It is a neighborhood gem and is safe place for families to meet and children to practice riding bikes and scooters. It is quiet and peaceful. To change the park in such a radical way carries the potential to become a site for protests, demonstrations, throngs of tourists, noise and even violence, stemming from longstanding controversies surrounding the proposed statue.

Please do not place this statue in our quiet, friendly, family neighborhood."

Neeta Patel, Interim Executive Director, Asian Americans United

Asian Americans United (AAU), a Philadelphia based community organization founded in 1985 to defend the rights of Asian Americans, strongly supports the acceptance of the Peace Plaza by the Philadelphia Art Commission and the City of Philadelphia. We believe that the Peace Plaza is a sincere and welcome effort to pursue peace and reconciliation of Korean comfort women by the Imperial government of Japan during World War II.

The sculpture does not shy away from that historical truth, painful as it is. But it does not wallow in it. Instead, it is an affirmation that lasting reconciliation can only take place after an honest acknowledgement of the crimes inflicted upon thousands of women.

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We would note that within the ranks of AAU many of us are but a generation or less removed from the direct experiences of war and its damaging corollary effects. Our organization includes people of Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino, South Asian, and other Asian ethnicities.

Our communal histories chronicle violent ethnic discord including mass killings. Survivors were often persecuted, imprisoned, exploited, displaced, relocated, and frequently traumatized by war. Our communities have survived but at considerable cost. These experiences are part of our historical memory.

Accordingly, AAU believes that the Philadelphia Art Commission should accept the Peace Plaza in the spirit in which it is offered: as an expression of peace and solidarity, and ultimately, reconciliation.

Yuriko Grenda

I recently learned about a plan to erect the Statue of Peace on city property in the Queen Village neighborhood of Philadelphia. I understand that the proposed statue, which is sometimes referred to as the Comfort Woman Statue, will have a large plaque that describes the sexual exploitation of Korean women by the Japanese Army during World War II. While I believe what happened during the war is repulsive and should never be repeated, this statue is a representation of the ongoing political issue between South Korea and Japan. This is strictly an unresolved political issue between South Korea and Japan and has nothing to do with the United States or anywhere else in the world. Erecting the statue in Philadelphia will signal to the Japanese community that Philadelphia is on the side of the Korean community, which will not only make the Japanese and Japanese Americans who live in and around Philadelphia uncomfortable and unwelcomed but also will sow further division between the Koreans and the Japanese. I have some personal friends who are Koreans here. Both of my teenage sons grew up with children whose parents are from South Korea. I certainly do not wish to damage our relationships with our friends and neighbors.

While I am against the creation of the Comfort Women Statue, I do support the idea of erecting a sculpture that symbolizes peace and universal women's rights. Although the sculpture does not have to be in human shape, it could be a woman/girl statue with no race-specific facial feature, or it could be several female statues that represent each race.

Thank you for reading this letter and I sincerely hope that the Philadelphia Art Commission will make the right decision by rejecting the proposal to erect the Comfort Woman Statue and instead considers erecting a nonpolitical work of art that is universal in nature and not divisive.

Anonymous

A Korean organization called "Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan" has been supporting this project. The former head of this NGO has been accused of misusing and embezzling funds destined for comfort women survivors and harassing them. Some members and their families were arrested by espionage for North Korea. This Korean Council has held anti-Japan demonstrations more than 1,500 times near the original statue in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.

Now the Korean Council is planning to support the project by financing USD 50,000 for elaboration of the statue and shipment to Philadelphia. Two members of PPPC joined the anti-Japan protest organized by the Korean NGO on October 26, 2021 and August 10, 2022. They try to use the U.S., the biggest ally of Japan, to make pressure on Japan on this issue.

The City Government and Art Commission have to investigate fully who comprises the Korean Council, what is their political purpose in exporting comfort women statues now to Philadelphia, what the connection is

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between the Korean Council and PPPC/ North Korea and if the money transfer from the Korean Council to the PPPC violates the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) before making any decisions.

Will the City allow receipt of the donation from this NGO even indirectly despite all these facts? If so, it will be a huge scandalous for the city.

Anonymous

We love the peace statue!

Anonymous

I am very much in favor of the Comfort Woman statue. I have lived in Philadelphia for three years (this is my fourth), and am a scholar of Japanese film, media and culture and Penn. I know the issue at hand very well, and know that any opposition to the statue is deeply connected to racial bigotry against Korean people. I have lived in Japan for 2 years, and am fluent in Japanese, and know that there is a strong and vocal community (especially online) that is deeply connected to Japanese nationalism and imperialism (and, indeed, even fascism). It is my strong belief that opposition to the Comfort Woman statue is related to fascist political ideology stretching back to Japan's history in WWII and beyond. Japan committed grave atrocities during the War, and unfortunately these atrocities (in the US context) tend to be overshadowed by Germany, which has done its fair share of apologizing. I say this, also, as a Jew, and as a person who lost 80% of her living family during the period between 1941 and 1945. Japan, however (partially, if not entirely, due to the fault of the Eisenhower administration and Cold War rhetoric) was not forced to make reparations in the same way. Indeed, Japanese schoolchildren are now taught that Comfort Women were prostitutes (rather than sex slaves/underage/abducted from their homes), who willingly were brought to Comfort Stations and were paid well for their services. Although I'm sure a few cases exist like this, the majority were, as the 1992 UN Commission declared, forcibly coerced into sex work, and kept against their will. This is fact, as shown in WAM (Woman's Active Museum on War and Peace) in Tokyo. There is a very large community of Comfort Woman and war atrocity denialists in Japan who refuse to acknowledge these and other heinous war crimes-- even 80 years later. Unfortunately, the women who have undergone these experiences are now reaching the end of their lives, or have passed away. This statue helps honor their memory.

Dr. Elisheva A. Perelman

As an historian of Japan and a granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, I believe that these memorials are necessary to address past trauma. Germany has done significant work dealing with its actions in WWII and the legacy of those actions. Sadly, the individuals who speak against the erection of this statue are preventing Japan from doing similarly, not only to the detriment of those affected by the actions and legacy of Japan in WWII, but to the detriment of Japan.

Anonymous

I teach East Asian history at the university level. I always teach the comfort women and especially the Korean comfort women issue. Japan's system of war-time sexual slavery is a fact. Japanese government documents remain, the testimony of the women remain, and the evidence collected for the Tokyo War Crimes Trial remain, now declassified in the National Archives. The excuse that it was war-time or that these women were just prostitutes out to make a profit are baseless. The comfort women issue highlights how violence against women is a part of modern warfare and it is our obligation to teach it just as it is our obligation to teach about the Holocaust, the My Lai massacre and other brutal acts of violence against civilian populations during war. Those

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that would oppose or deny the facts or the teaching of this subject are far-right extremists who want to sanitize the past of any inconvenient truths that paint a critical picture of Japan. Similar to those who profess the "Lost Cause" myth that the Civil War was about state's rights and that African-American slaves were treated fairly in the US, those that would deny the truths about the Japanese empire during WWII do so with a far-right extremist agenda. They are funded by far-right political organizations in Japan and their attempt to sanitize the past is not limited to domestic targets such as school textbooks, opposing historical documentaries such as Miki Dezaki's *Shusenjo*, and spreading right-wing hate on the internet, but it extends to the US and Europe. When communities want to commemorate the suffering of the Korean comfort women with a statue, they are always there to oppose, to deny, to distort the historical record to support their far-right extremist agenda.

Eugene Desyatnik

As a resident of Bella Vista, I want to applaud the public amenity, design elements, activation of public space through programming in Queen Village. I also applaud the objectives of raising awareness of this dark moment in humanity's history.

I would though like to encourage a design that encompasses and uplifts the important voices of victims in a number of armed conflicts and the horrific treatment of girls and young women particularly during these dark times of war. This would more effectively inspire future generations to understand and hopefully never repeat these events.

While I agree that art's goal is at times to make us uncomfortable, and challenge our thinking -- the sole focus on the actions of one army or nation, rather than broader themes that highlight the horrific exploitation of young women during humanity's most ugly times of war, makes it less likely that park visitors will walk away realizing this can and has happened elsewhere, and we must take active steps to ensure it will not happen ever again. War is a dark time, and while the degree to which these horrific consequences were orchestrated by Japan at the very top, appear to be a matter of ongoing diplomatic relations and discussion, a more universal approach in this case seems more appropriate. While I cannot begin to understand the trauma of the victims and their families, and out of respect my hope for what I'd like to see in a public space and a monument is subordinate to that, I can only gently add that I prefer creating a monument that includes but also transcends the circumstances of exploitation that developed in the context of one specific armed conflict, to inspire visitors to this public space to walk away with a more universal warning and timeless reminder. Not zooming out to me seems a missed opportunity to include that lesson, which can be achieved by working with a broader coalition of communities to inform such a design.

Anonymous

"The Statue of Peace" is not a memorial to girls and women.

It is a tool to make money through lies, and even to develop nuclear weapons with that money.

The statue is a damage Philadelphia's honor and a threat to world peace.

Anonymous

I support the Peace Memorial. It is a message of peace and reconciliation. It is one of the few memorials about women. It also represents women all over the world throughout history who demand justice and freedom from rape and sexual assault. Unfortunately, the Japanese government is still in denial mode by using its influence to stop this memorial from being built. I know that from personal experience. As a member of the "Comfort Women" Justice Coalition that built the San Francisco "Comfort Women" Memorial in 2017, we had to fight

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off the Japanese Consulate office's heavy-handed tooth and nail lobbying against it. We successfully built the memorial by educating the public and having truth and facts on our side.

On 9-24-2022 we will be celebrating the 5th anniversary of the Memorial. In these five years, and despite the pandemic, we reached thousands of people who visited the memorial and learned its history during WWII. People go away saddened about learning what happened to the ""comfort women"" victims but inspired by their courage to speak up against their aggressors. They are better people for learning about this hidden history and the forgotten femicide against women and girls during WWII.

Please support this memorial.

Anonymous

This statue serves to remember and honor of the Korean women and girls who were brutally raped and tortured by the Japanese Imperial Army. Understanding the full weight of our history is crucial in ensuring a brighter future.

Anonymous

Just as the US government has acknowledged the atrocities of slavery, the same MUST be said about the brutal rape and torture of these young Korean women and GIRLS by the Japanese government. Imagine if it was your own daughter. The statue is a reminder and memorial and should be present for all to bear witness.

Anonymous

The PPPC has already started fundraising through their website. They have collected US\$3,435 as of September 7, 2022. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/buildingpeace>

The PPPC has received a check of USD10,000 for this project from the Washington Butterfly, another Korean organization in D.C.

This is a clear violation of the paragraph 8 of the Directive 67 which stipulates that *"8. Donors should not begin to raise funds or fabricate a monument prior to receiving all of the necessary approvals, including, without limitation, the approval of the Philadelphia Art Commission and any permit or licensing approvals required under the Philadelphia Code."*

Please acknowledge it constitutes a violation of the rule.

Anonymous

The statue is very important because it remembers the many victims that were brutally tortured by the Japanese imperial army. Japan never apologized for their crime.

Anonymous

Thank you, City of Philadelphia, for considering to build a memorial to remember an important history for all women. "Comfort Women" system of military sexual slavery is not limited to Koreans but to women and girls from more than 20 countries, including Americans and Europeans as well, and it's not a thing of the past because this atrocity - sexual violence and rape against women during military conflict - is repeating itself today. We should remember what happened in the past in order to prevent the same atrocities from happening again. We can also learn from the courageous breaking of silence by the "comfort women" victims who initiated an equivalent of the MeToo movement from multiple countries. It's not to bash Japan. Many Japanese citizens and Japanese Americans disagree with the current Japanese government's history denialism led by the far-right political faction. We must work together to ensure this largest case of institutionalized sexual violence against

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women is remembered and taught in the US and the world - just like the Holocaust - so that we don't make the same mistake. Thank you for standing up for women and justice, City of Philadelphia.

Anonymous

There is a rumor that Ms Kelly Lee, Executive Director of OACCE has been lobbying to several members of the Art Commission in favor of the project taking advantage of the position and reporting frequently to Council member Helen Gym who has been pressuring the city government on this project and is a strong candidate for the next Mayor.

Can Ms Lee pledge that it is not true?

Anonymous

Shinjoo Choo, Chair of PPPC coming from Korea, is an activist associated with the Korean Council which has led anti-Japan protests over 1,500 times. As a proof, she joined the anti-Japan protest of the Korean Council August this year near the comfort women statue in front of Japanese Embassy in Seoul criticizing Japan. Although she claims it is for peace and reconciliation, there are many Korean groups that utilize the comfort women statue beyond that purpose. The city officials should be aware that she is trying to deceive you and use the city of Philadelphia for her own political purpose which is to humiliate Japan through U.S. Moreover, she has approached several members of Japanese Association of Greater Philadelphia as well as several Japanese Americans in the city to show that only minority Japanese are opposing to the project. In fact, she is the one who has been dividing the local community and our peaceful lives. PPPC claims that it was disassociated from Korean American Association of Greater Philadelphia to show it has nothing to do with Korea disguising itself. The Art Commission should know why she devotes so much to build the statue of "this design" on "public land", not on private land as in many other cases in the U.S."

Anonymous

"Conservative and anti-Japanese groups clashed late at night for about four hours in front of the comfort women statue in Seoul on September 11, 2022.

<https://jp.yna.co.kr/view/AJP20220912000400882>

A conservative group suddenly held a rally around the ""Girls for Peace"" statue in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, ROK, symbolizing victims of the comfort women of the former Japanese army, and clashed for four hours with an anti-Japanese group defending the statue. Members of the conservative group ""New Freedom Solidarity"" held a rally near the statue at around 10 p.m., demanding the dissolution of the ""Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (Korean Council)", a support group for the comfort women victims. The two groups got into a scuffle with the ""Anti-Japanese Action"" of an innovative group that was guarding the statue, causing a commotion in the area. The clash between the two groups continued after midnight on the 12th. The standoff continued for a long time, and one rally participant was taken to the hospital after being exhausted.

The police set up a line of control between the two groups to prevent a struggle, but the two groups turned up the volume on their speakers and engaged in a heated exchange of words. Hearing the commotion, conservative and innovative YouTubers rushed to the scene. The noise did not abate, and some guests staying at nearby accommodations came out to complain. The standoff between the two sides ended when "New Freedom Solidarity" left the scene shortly after 2:00 a.m. on January 12.

We don't want this happen in Philadelphia."

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Anonymous

In Strathfield, Australia, in August 2015 the City council decided to take no further action concerning a comfort woman statue as the proposal did not meet the criteria of the Council's memorial policy which was "Commemorating a community association and /or group that have contributed significantly to the Strathfield Community."

Isn't it same as the criteria established in the Philadelphia's Directive 67 (II.2. Proposals for commemorative monuments to an individual or an event will only be considered for those persons or events that are evidenced to have made significant contributions to Philadelphia, have had significant impact on Philadelphia and beyond, and represent broadly shared community values)?

I hope the Art Commission will come to the rational conclusion as the city of Strathfield did.

Anonymous

PPPC mentioned that they had received supporting letters from Queen Village Neighbors Association. However, when they approached some of the residents in Queen Village, they only explained that this is a “peace statue” and kept the fact secret that it has actually been used as a symbol of hate against Japan and Japanese people. Moreover, President Eleonor Ingersoll of QVNA has committed to this project but she is a member of the Board of the Interstate Land Management Corporation (ILMC), which manages the park in question. We believe she is an interested party in this project of half million dollars and she therefore violates the conflict-of-interest policy, which may result in the nullification of QVNA’s supporting letter.

Has the city verified this connection after it has received the letter?

<https://qvna.org/conflict-of-interest-policy/>

Anonymous

"The Statue of Peace"" is a symbol of state-sponsored fraud. They were officially hired prostitutes. There was no compulsion.

How do you answer when a child who sees a statue asks what the statue is?

Do you lie?

Anonymous

Has the city considered the negative impact on sister city relations between Philadelphia and the city of Kobe, which started in 1986?

After the erection of the comfort women statue in Glendale in 2014, the city of Higashi Osaka decided to freeze its sister city relations with the city of Glendale.

In October 2020, the mayors of the cities of Nagoya sent opposition letters to the mayor of Berlin, Germany over their comfort women statue. In October 2018, the city of Osaka had to cut sister relations with San Francisco which started in 1957 because of the erection of the comfort women statue.

Has the city communicated with the city of Kobe on this issue, and if so, how has the city government responded to their comments?

We don’t want to see the conflict will affect to our friend cities overseas like the city of Kobe which has been supporting restoration of our Shofuso among other important cooperation over three decades.

Anonymous

The inscription of the plaque proposed by PPPC mentions the period of comfort women as “from 1931 to 1945”. Even pro-Korean experts have never mentioned “1931” as the starting date. Also there is no historically proved documents of “hundreds of thousands” of comfort women either.

Has the city verified the historical accuracy of the inscription? If not, we propose that the project should be reviewed by the experts or the Historical Commission."

Anonymous

Temple University Japan campus is the only foreign university recognized by the Japanese government and has been contributing the friendly academic cooperation between Japan and Philadelphia.

The Dean of Temple University Japan Campus has expressed his serious concerns over the comfort women statue built in Philadelphia. If erected, it will generate the feeling of hate of Japanese people against the city of Philadelphia and Temple University Japan Campus affecting the reputation of the Campus and the number of new enrollment, as a result, its financial situation.

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The Art Commission and city should consider seriously reputation and business damage which this project may cause to the Temple University.

Anonymous

There were some attempts of mediation by the city on this project based on the request of the Japanese Association of Greater Philadelphia. However, Mr Randy Duque, Deputy Director for the Commission of Human Relations, told the Japanese Association, after the consultation with Ms Kelly Lee, Executive Director of OACCE, that they could only mediate the inscription of plaque but nothing else. This is not called "mediation". The Japanese Association is ready for dialogue, but the Art Commission should tell those city officials that true mediation is only possible without putting any preconditions."

Anonymous

The Art Commission should know the fact that Ms Kelly Lee, executive director of OACCE, has been working for the Council member Helen Gym who has been pressuring the city government on this project, not for the citizens nor local community of Philadelphia, as shown, for example, in the following email dated November 30, 2021. It is a violation of neutrality of the city.

*From: Kelly R. Lee <Kelly.Lee@Phila.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 1:49 PM
To: Helen Gym <Helen.Gym@Phila.gov>; Jennifer Kates <Jennifer.Kates@phila.gov>; Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>
Cc: Marguerite Anglin <Marguerite.Anglin@phila.gov>; Stephanie Fuentes <Stephanie.Fuentes@Phila.gov>
Subject: FW: Peace Plaza (Statue of Peace) Follow Up*

Good afternoon-

Earlier today OACCE met with Shinjoo and Dave and we agreed to have a community town hall with all of the stakeholders to clear any misconceptions and/or misinformation about the Statue of Peace. This Town Hall will happen prior to going to the Art Commission for final approval. I believe that taking this step will strengthen the presentation to the Art Commission. We will be work with Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations and the Office of Immigrant Affairs to plan the community town hall. Our hope is to find a date in early 2022.

Kelly

*Kelly Lee | Chief Cultural Officer and Director
Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
City of Philadelphia*

Anonymous

There is serious doubt that OACCE is taking advantage of its position for lobbying to the members of Art Commission in favor of this project. Can OACCE pledge that they have never lobbied and will never lobby to the members of Art Commission before voting?

Nataly J.H. Han - Chairwomen of Korea Verband in Berlin/ Germany

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www.koreaverband.de / www.trotfrauen.de / www.trotfrauen.museum

Dear Commissioners,

my name is Nataly Jung-Hwa Han and the chair women of Korea Verband, a German-Korean NGO based in Berlin / Germany. We erected the Statue of Peace together with 18 Organizations in Berlin. The Japanese government made still high pressure on the German Government, but the citizens of the district Berlin Mitte were so successful that we have kept the statue. Our experiences are really amazing under the aspects:

- Germany as an example of how to emerge from the atrocities from nazism to active peace makers
- Statue to as a stellar educational tool on sexual violence
- Examples of the Statue as a community building tool
- a symbol for the postcolonial feminist movement

As a chairwoman of Korea Verband, a in German based NGO want to tell about my last two years since we set up a Statue of Peace in Berlin Mitte.

- Germany as an example of how to emerge from the atrocities from nazism to active peace makers
- Statue to as a stellar educational tool on sexual violence
- Examples of the Statue as a community building tool
- a Symbol against the states and racism, sexism.

Judge Lillian Sing, ret.

I am a retired judge from San Francisco, CA. I am the first Asian American female judge in No. California. I retired as a judge to help install SF ""Comfort Women"" Memorial. The SF Memorial helps to educate the public about the ""Comfort Women"" system where girls/women were sexually enslaved by the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces during WW2. The memorial is not anti-Japan. It is about history. Bad or good, history needs to be taught so we learn from it. ""Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"" George Santayana.

It is not just a Korea -Japan issue- just like the holocaust is not just Jewish issues in Europe, Please vote Yes to install the ""Comfort Women"" Memorial in Philadelphia, the city of love, the city who condemns sexual violence and sex trafficking. The Memorial will help move the world to declare sexual violence as a strategy of war is a crime against humanity for which governments must be held accountable.

Judith Mirkinson, President, ""Comfort Women"" Justice Coalition"

In August 2015, the SF Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to build a memorial to the ""comfort women"" and against sexual violence and sex trafficking. Although it had broad support there were some who claimed the statue would promote disharmony and bring out anti-Asian violence. None of that proved to be the case, instead, Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, Korean Americans, Filipino Americans, peace activists and women's and human rights activists all worked together and built greater unity.

The statue proved to be both a teaching tool for all generations and a beacon of truth to all those who denied that hundreds of thousands of women and girls were sexually enslaved by the Japanese Imperial Army during WW II. It also provided a place for all those to come together to actually fight the rising anti-Asian violence in our community.

As the world experiences an ever-rising degree of gender violence and femicide, these statues provide a way to bring attention to the issue and are a focal point for making sure that this violence will one day be eliminated. I urge you to build the statue.

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Anonymous

The statute is not just about Korea and Japan. It symbolizes every women's struggle against sexual violence. The "Comfort women" stations instituted by Japan during WW2 were sex slavery stations and women/girls were kidnapped, raped and many died. The statute will serve to educate the public that sexual violence as a strategy of war is a crime against humanity for which governments must be held accountable.

正義連主張の「性奴隷制」は、その前身「挺対協」が「就職詐欺」を含め、韓国人の反日感情を焚付け、活動の感情的理解を強いる創作定義でした。その為の証言集を次々と編集発刊し『証拠』と叫び、その継続増進を30年も図って来た組織集金詐欺でした。30年以上たった今でも、「真相究明」を要求しています。

「性奴隷制」の解明は、その一次資料による証明は一つも無く当時日本国民だった朝鮮人からの状況証言等を含め状況証拠も存在しません。更に戦争犯罪を問う目的の米軍捕虜調査資料にもない。挺対協発行の8冊の証言集の解釈主張通りの証言こそ「真相究明」が必要なのです。

30年間で、逆に慰安所管理人の日記の発見等、少なくとも組織主張の「性奴隷制」を否定する手記は出てきている始末です。正義連とその取巻きは、証言を以って「証拠なら沢山ある」とは言いますが、個別の一人として、証言を補完する証拠で固め、「性奴隷制」存在の立証はしていません。

「証言集」は編纂時に発生した歴史事象。それ事態は証拠には成りません。時代がたってから聴き取った「伝聞」だからです。正義連は、自らが扇動した反日と強く結び付いた国民感情を背景に政府に圧力をかけ、30年間悉く日韓政府間の交渉努力を粉砕に成功して来ました。

正義連定義「性奴隷」は韓国人社会では「正義」を手にしていました。しかし、約1世代30年もそれを続けると、それが社会的法則として動くことで、自らが叫んだ普遍性獲得を持つ如く錯覚を抱き、支援金用途で脇の甘さを晒してしまいました。

「分かち合いの家」と「正義連」で不正発覚がしました。一人は疾走後変死体で見つかり自殺処理。一人は国会議員となり逮捕されることなく長い公判が続いています。不正の鍵を握っていたともとれる正義連責任者も自殺と成っています。外でもそうですが韓国では疑惑で能く自殺が発生します。

結果、正義連定期水曜デモにはかつて20万人で通りを埋め尽くしましたが、昨日2022-09-14は数える限り、集客は動員組織の20人程度に縮小しました。慰安婦詐欺を訴える対抗集会の方が多くなっている状況です。

依然としてメディアは聯合ニュースとKBS等機関報道のコピーと主観による主張報道で埋め尽くされてはいますが、これは文在寅政権時に経営陣を入替えた結果です。その影響で以前として感情的に組織定義の「性奴隷」を正しく証明されたものとして捉える韓国人は多いですが組織信認は地に落ちてます。

その為、自由意思でのデモ動員は働かなくなりました。組織動員された韓国人は、対抗集会の主張が嫌が上でも耳に入ります。組織は我に世界中の信認ありとの印象を保とうと今は、盛んに彼等の定義する「良心的日本人」と「良識ある市民」を集会に招待しています。

そして、大手メディア報道を中心に、「良心的日本人」と「良識ある市民」の主張報道を盛んに作り流しています。全て韓国人社会の感情的理解維持の為です。しかし、海外活動は泥縄の為、「場の支配」が終わり崩壊が始まりました。

ドイツの効公立大への無償提供されたと「少女像」設置を謳いましたが、組織恒例の寄付参加者の名簿碑設置を前に学長より撤去命令が発せられました。恐らく、韓国内のソウル日本大使館前や釜山領事館前と同様の闘争が組織的にあるでしょう。ご照覧あれです。

すんなりと場の支配を確立した場所を規則を理解し従う集団ではありませんので。芸術目的の定期展示でも
政治的活動で永久設置を働きかける如き集団です。海外の皆様はね少なくとも、その辺りは、認識しておくことを強くお勧めします。

人は弱い人々に同情します。自分のことの様に心を痛め、寄り添おうとします。日本人の私もかつてそうでした。2015年日韓合意獲得をした政権発足時に日本の視点を疑い徹底的に調べました。結論は合意は可怪しいと言えるものでした。

しかし、合意には正統な日韓政府の行政にマウントする反社勢力の排除の意図が在ったのだと今は理解しています。正義連は外交交渉に口出した上で、識らなかつたとし口先で合意潰しを図りました。その朴政権は崩壊。文在寅が「蠟燭革命」と自賛する犯行で政権を奪取し、慰安婦合意は有名無実化されました。
日本は無条件で申請した女性全員に、時の総理の手紙と国民の心でもある基金のお金を添える対応をアジア女性基金で実施済みです。

それに対し組織挺対協は申請すれば「公娼」と認めたことになるとし老婆の申請を妨害したのです。組織としては「性奴隷制」定義として活動継続が必要だったのでしょね。この時も一部老婆が組織に反旗を翻しましたが、彼女等は組織定義...

Anonymous

This area is residential and does not seem like an appropriate place for a controversial peace of art or an area that could be used for demonstrations. That area of Front st provides green space that is a limited resource and should not be subjected to further development.

Anonymous

This is a wonderful project that will bring much appreciated new beauty, learning and options for community togetherness. There is no reason to oppose this other than blatant racism.

Anonymous

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This art proposal has nothing to do with Queen Village where I live. Human history is replete with misery, but that doesn't mean we need a statue for every terrible thing that happened. Especially when that event has no connection to where it's being memorialized. There is absolutely no connection to this event with the city of Philadelphia or my neighborhood. I can't imagine anyone in the neighborhood requested this. Why couldn't this statue go near the other war memorials in Philadelphia instead of on a residential side street?

Roya Taheri (1/3)

Unfortunately, history of humanity is full of all kinds of abuse, especially towards women. There are at very present atrocities going on in middle east by Taliban, ISIS (el-Qaeda), Syrian government, Iran's government, African countries, India, Pakistan and so many places in the world towards women. It is odd to single out one country at a single point of history in the past and blame them forever all around the world.

It would have been understandable if there was a Hiroshima Peace memorial park, or a Holocaust Museum in every city, due to the magnitude of the incidents, and the importance of their lessons to avoid Nuclear war and genocide. However, comfort women issue is and has been so common in every war throughout history, that if we want to make a Peace Statue about it, we cannot name only one country. Can you name a nation which has never had this issue? War has always devastated humankind in all aspects. I believe if there is to be a statue of Peace, it is not naming any country or specific incident, but a general statement about abuse of women in wars, sex trafficking, and other occasions."

Margaret Scherneck

This project is NOT in keeping with the Historic Heritage and Character of our Queen Village/Southwark community, 260 years this past July. I am the 5th generation of my family to live adjacent to this proposed project. I am extremely concerned about the division surrounding this project among the Korean and Japanese community and the negative impact it has already caused in our neighborhood. We have worked very hard over the years to keep this area peaceful and serene. It is imperative we keep it this way. Please reject this project and help us maintain our historic heritage and values we have tirelessly worked hard to maintain. Two National Historic Shrines are just blocks away Gloria Dei Old Swedes Church and Shot Tower Recreation Center.

Anonymous

I am very concerned about this statue will only divide the Asian communities here in Philadelphia and promote hate. I live right across from the City Hall, and I am already concerned about my personal safety due to multiple demonstrations/protests during the pandemic. Being Asian living in the city, as this statue might bring heated and often loud and violent protests, I would be concerned even more about my personal safety living in the city. While living in the city is solely my choice, I feel that it is also my right to live in the city peacefully and enjoy the city living. It is also my responsibility to create a peaceful environment for myself and others who live in the city. Thus, I am asking you NOT to approve the Statue of Peace.

As a longtime resident of Philadelphia who seeks peace and unity between ALL Asian Americans and ALL Philadelphians, I respectfully request the Commission not to approve the proposal of the statue at this time.

Roya Taheri (2/3)

"Rape in War: Challenging the Tradition of Impunity

Dorothy Q. Thomas and Regan E. Ralph

<https://www.hrw.org/legacy/women/docs/rapeinwar.htm>

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The article names Yugoslavia, Moroccan mercenary troops fought with Free French forces in Italy, Nazis raped Jewish women and Soviet Union women. Soviets then exacted their revenge upon German women, Pakistani soldiers terrorized the Bengali people, raping women, Turkish troops against Cyprus, Bosnia against Croatian women, Peru, Indian security forces, although against Somali refugees, Burma against Rohingya Muslim women, Serbian forces, and the list goes on.

South Korea Is Yet to Recognize Their Own War Crimes (dailykos.com)

The Vietnam War also saw a new breed of children born of South Korean fathers and Vietnamese mothers. These children are known by the derogatory term Lai Dai Han, abandoned by the fathers and brought up by their mothers in total poverty. Their numbers vary widely, from as few as 5,000 to as many as 30,000. Some of their mothers were in liaisons with the soldiers; most of them were raped and impregnated. But all of them were deserted and left to take care of the babies that society looked down upon.

Roya Taheri (3/3)

If the purpose of the statue is truly "Peace", let us give it a general title such as "Women, Victims of War." And describe that women have been and are suffering in the wars and conflicts in many shapes, of rape, poverty, devastation due to loss of family members, trauma, etc. Let us instead of Japan bashing, start a unifying initiative towards Peace. Get together and see how we can eliminate War. How we people can set behind our differences and look towards a unified and peaceful society where instead of blaming each other for what has happened in the past, we take constructive steps towards solving the present issues. For example, Gun Violence in Philadelphia is one of the real issues that various groups could work towards together. It is a local problem, it is the problem of today, and it will impact all of us.

Comments Received via Q&A Feature During Meeting (Monday September 19, 2022)

List of Commenters:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. CK | 9/19/2022 9:45 |
| 2. EwingCole-Julie Hoffman | 9/19/2022 9:59 |
| 3. A Philadelphia resident (1/2) | 9/19/2022 10:19 |
| 4. Fox David | 9/19/2022 10:23 |
| 5. Tony Marano | 9/19/2022 10:34 |
| 6. Edward Mazurek | 9/19/2022 11:13 |
| 7. A Philadelphia resident (2/2) | 9/19/2022 11:14 |
| 8. Tom Thompson | 9/19/2022 11:30 |
| 9. MKishimoto | 9/19/2022 11:38 |
| 10. HoJun Yu (1/2) | 9/19/2022 12:04 |
| 11. HoJun Yu (2/2) | 9/19/2022 12:14 |

Full non-procedural comments, in the order they were received:

CK 9/19/2022 9:45

I have to go to work. This event during war was terribly horrific but had nothing to do with Philadelphia and the United States. This statue should not be allowed to be positioned in Queen Village. This is not a statue of peace. Isn't this against the Art Museum policy to approve such a statue for Philadelphia?

EwingCole-Julie Hoffman 9/19/2022 9:59

Beautiful project. I look forward to experiencing it once it is installed. Brava.

A Philadelphia resident (1/2) 9/19/2022 10:19

Looking at the statue photo, there is not one paragraph what was explained but are several paragraphs inscribed on the left side of a woman. Please present them to our audience what is written word by word.

Fox David 9/19/2022 10:23

I have several concerns regarding this straightforward and sincere plan behalf of memorial WWII sexual slavery crime and its victims. Are there any more educational aspects and financial supports to boost more historical educations for younger generation. The right and cold true history - what really happened in those dark days.

Tony Marano 9/19/2022 10:34

Ms. Shinjoo Cho mentioned restitution was denied. In 1965 \$800 million dollars Japan gave to the government of South Korea as restitution. The South Korean government kept the money for various public works projects, none given to the former Comfort Women.

Edward Mazurek 9/19/2022 11:13

Directive 67 requires that commemorative monuments will only be considered for persons or events that have made significant contributions to Philadelphia. Comfort women made no contributions to Philadelphia. Directive 67

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requires comfort women to have had a significant impact on Philadelphia. They have not had an impact on Philadelphia. The city is engaging in spinning this in a way that simply does not comply with its own law.

A Philadelphia resident (2/2) 9/19/2022 11:14

According to the article on the Vietnam War by Norman Coleman, a former US Senate from Minnesota dated October 14, 2015, "South Korean soldiers violently raped and sexually assaulted thousands of young women, some as young as 13 and 14 years of age. Today, between 5,000 and 30,000 children of mixed Korean-Vietnamese ancestry live at the margins of Vietnamese society."

According to the report by the United Nations on March 30, 2022, "Nearly half of all pregnancies, totaling 121 million each year throughout the world, are unintended."

My question to the Art Commission is, what is your justification for picking a single case of the Japanese Army conducts from the past history to erect such a statue with the title of "Statue of Peace" which is supposed to appeal to the worldwide gender and racial equality?"

Tom Thompson 9/19/2022 11:30

Suggested rewording ...

"This statue commemorates hundreds of thousands of girls and women from Asia, Oceania, and Europe who fall victim to systemic sexual slavery, abuse, and aggression as the result of wars and conflicts. In 1991, Korean survivors of abuse during WWII broke the cycle of shame and silence by testifying and urging the world to protect the future."

MKishimoto 9/19/2022 11:38

If the commission feels that too much has been invested in this project to cancel it and wants to move forward, I totally agree with Tom Thompson's suggested re-wording, and even would suggest you confine it to the first sentence. Abuse of women happens in all wars, and should be acknowledged, but no need to place sole blame on the Japanese. There is enough conflict among races these days - we don't need to provoke more hate and prejudice. Perhaps they felt that they could get away with this because the Japanese are a small minority in this city, but I know Philadelphia can do better than this.

HoJun Yu (1/2) 9/19/2022 12:04

Addition comments for the opposed: 1. Achieving justice is political. 2. Just because people are "uncomfortable" to hear truths about their governments, doesn't mean they should be subjected to ignorance or revisionist history to continue living blissfully in ignorance. We can only progress forward with discourse, just like Asian and Black relations in the US. Should Asians in the US walk away from conversations when they are challenged with topics like anti-Blackness? Let us not infantilize people and believe in their ability to learn from discomfort. 3. If anything, the statue is extremely relevant to the geographical location, considering that we have Vietnam and Korean War memorials nearby. With the statue, we can discuss state-sanctioned violence caused by the American military and its allies in wars.

HoJun Yu (2/2) 9/19/2022 12:14

4. People keep mentioning anti-Asian hate crimes. If they are so passionate about the possibility of Japanese-Americans being harmed by a statue fighting for peace, where were they, when the US has been spreading anti-China propaganda for all of its history? I have not heard of anti-Japanese hate crimes within Germany that happened because of the statue in Berlin or Kassel.

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5. People keep mentioning “how about all the women affected by violence everywhere?” This is a classic example eerily similar to Black Lives Matter vs. All Lives Matter. We don’t have to dismiss one group’s struggle or lump all the struggles together. We can acknowledge the many different struggles that are unique/different and should be honored, not diluting them, and reducing them into one vague “social issue”. Different issues require different methods of justice and resolution. We should honor all struggles and fight along with each group in solidarity."