



Canada Association for Learning & Preserving the History of WWII in Asia

78 St. Patrick Street, Suite 134, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 3K8 Tel: (416) 918-7003

March 12, 2007

The Right Honorable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada,

Canada ALPHA (Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia) was formed in 1997. Its mandate is to foster humanity education and racial harmony with a mission to promote public awareness, learning and preservation of Asian WWII history. We have been working with Canadian educators in B.C. and Ontario to integrate this important, but relatively unknown, history about human rights abuses into secondary school curriculum in the two provinces. In the last three years, we have organized study tours bringing close to 100 Canadian educators to Asia where that horrible chapter of history occurred, giving the teachers first-hand evidence and knowledge of the long-forgotten human tragedies and atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army during WWII.

Canada today is home to millions of people from those parts of Asia ravaged by the Japanese Imperial Army during those years. In this age of interconnectedness and global trade, Canadian students cannot afford to learn Eurocentric history only, hence the importance of learning and knowing real world history.

Canada has also enjoyed a reputation as a fair and just country few others in the world can compare with. We take pride in our government taking a stand against injustice and human rights abuses anywhere in the world, voicing our disapproval and condemnation on events that contradict our Canadian values. This is why we all feel very disappointed at the continuing silence of our government since the shameful denial of the facts about the sex slavery system in the Japanese military during WWII by Japanese Prime Minister Abe two weeks ago.

The sex slavery system, euphemized as 'comfort women' by the Japanese military, was the first and only such system of wholesale raping of young women, in massive numbers, in the world. The horrendous and inhumane system was devised and sanctioned by the highest commands of power in the Japanese political and military circles. It was a meticulously-planned, carefully and systematically implemented way of degrading the emotional and physical well-being of woman victims for the sexual gratification of the lusty military men in the Japanese Army. These unfortunate young women were treated

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as sub-human, their bodies violated, and their dignity destroyed, during what were supposed to be their most beautiful youthful years. The often tearful public testimonials of scores of aging Asian and Dutch women, now in their 80's and 90's, all pointed to a common experience: they were tricked, forcibly taken, or outright kidnapped by agents of the Japanese military, into the comfort stations where they were gang-raped by as many as 20 soldiers everyday, for periods as long as several years. Historians, both Japanese and others, have unearthed secret documents from Japanese government and military files, about the undeniable central role the Japanese military played in this despicable sex slavery system. Now the Japanese Prime Minister has asked the world to believe him that there was no coercion, and that these poor women, from different backgrounds and from different countries, were liars, collaborating to destroy the good name of Japan.

We urge the Prime Minister of Canada, the Canadian Government and Parliament to condemn the disgraceful comments made by the Japanese Prime Minister regarding this issue, using the strongest terms possible, to show our indignation and our disapproval of their behaviour. We appeal to the Parliament of Canada to pass a resolution to urge the Japanese Diet to acknowledge and accept responsibilities, sincerely and unequivocally, for the horrendous war crimes and atrocities that the Japanese Imperial Army inflicted on many of its Asian neighbours during WWII.

For a proper closure to take place, the Japanese government and its people have to come to terms with this dark chapter of their history, and learn a lesson from it and make sure that militarism would not revive in their country. There is no other way for true peace and reconciliation to take place.

For many comfort women who are still alive, and a lot more who perished with shame, Japan certainly owes them an apology. The rest of the world also owes them an apology, for our silence for over 60 years.

Yours respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Y.K. Wong', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joseph Y.K. Wong C.M., M.D., D.Sc.
Co-Founder and Co-Chair

c.c. All federal M.P.'s

Encl: Toronto ALPHA's 2006 Peace & Reconciliation Study Tour DVD (11 minutes)

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