handbook_2014.qxp 17/06/2014 19:41 Page 151

had to avoid infiltration from the secret police and other repressive institutions. Instructions were passed from person to person. Participants were mainly trained during the actions themselves, where we evaluated each action on the spot.

Participants faced legal and illegal sanctions when detained and prosecuted as they often were. Tear gas, beatings, detention, and prosecution were common practices used in retaliation against demonstrators. Torture was also a possible consequence of being arrested. Not only Sebastian Acevedo movement participants faced these sanctions, also reporters and journalists willing to report the actions and the issues that were exposed.

At some of the actions, there were as many as 300 participants. Some 500 people participated in total. There were Christians and non-Christians, priests, monks, slum dwellers, students, old people, homemakers, and members of various human rights movements; people of every class, ideology, and walk of life.

The main goal was to get rid of torture in Chile. The means chosen was to shake up national awareness (consciousness raising) and rouse the conscience of the nation until the regime would get rid of torture or the country would get rid of the regime. In 1988, after a widespread anti-intimidation campaign, the nonviolent "Chile Sí, Pinochet No" campaign helped, to Pinochet's shock, to defeat a plebiscite designed to ratify his rule.

Efforts to end the culture of impunity that arose during the Pinochet years, and to engage in national reconciliation, continue, but nonviolent protest provided an important means, among others, to overthrow the dictatorship.

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South Korea: the power of international solidarity

Jungmin Choi

It was the result of solidarity efforts between activists at home and abroad that the conscientious objection movement in this ultra-militaristic South Korean society began. In 2000 Karin Lee and John Feffer, who were staff members at the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) office in Tokyo and who had been working with many South Korean civic groups, recognised that movements against the Korean military, militarism, conscription system, and other related institutions in Korea were not very active. In July of the same year, Taiwan introduced an alternative military service system. When Karin and John heard this news, they thought that it might be time for South Korea to begin discussing these topics more openly and widely as the circumstances in both Taiwan and South Korea were quite similar with respect to military confrontation, economic growth, and geographical location. As they were looking for an organisation to work with, they met Sangyeul Sohn and me, both of us activists at the Solidarity for Peace and Human Rights (SPR) at the time.

Soon thereafter, a working group was formed within SPR, and the members began to translate and study foreign language sources concerning the military and conscription. Back then, not even the concept of conscientious objection

ANTI FLAG SWEARING DIRECT ACTION, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA. PHOTO: JUNGMIN CHOI

to military service existed in Korea, and barely any materials were available in Korean. Naturally, the SPR working group faced some challenges in the beginning but continued researching the human rights violations suffered by Jehovah's Witnesses — who at the time were the only conscientious objectors — as well as other issues of the conscription system in Korea.

Consequently, in March 2001, SPR and other civic organisations in Korea held, with the support of AFSC, a semipublic workshop to discuss the problems of the conscription system and to search for alternatives to this system. Around 50 Korean activists and researchers who had been interested in this topic, in addition to activists from Taiwan and Colombia, were invited to exchange their experiences. We shared what we had researched and the difficulties we had found, and mapped out some strategies. During this period our strategy was to keep the masses informed about the demonstrable justification of conscientious objection to military service, so we wrote articles and organised various kinds of workshops. Despite the radical angle, this issue shocked many as they learned about the oppression and hardship Jehovah's Witnesses had been facing for 60 years.

In July of the same year, we visited Taiwan to learn more about its alternative to military service and, at around the same time, began to establish our relationship with War Resisters' International. We wanted to build upon our work and learn more about conscientious objection as a peace movement. We attended the WRI annual seminar in Turkey in September 2001. After the seminar we were able to build a stronger connection with WRI. Subsequently, Andreas Speck, who was a coordinator of the Right to Refuse to Kill Program at WRI, visited Korea in 2002 and discussed how the international community

handbook_2014.qxp 17/06/2014 19:41 Page 153

could support the movement in Korea, a latecomer in the conscientious objection movement. As a result, an international conference focused on conscientious objection was held in Korea in March 2003, and two Korean activists attended another WRI seminar in Israel in May 2003. Additionally, one Korean activist interned at WRI in London. All of these activities were supported by AFSC and WRI.

Before 2003, although conscientious objection was a hot issue in Korean society, the issue was discussed from too much of a human rights perspective. The debate was only focused on addressing an alternative to mandatory military service in order to provide relief to the individual conscientious objector. Conscientious objectors were therefore seen as passive victims, whereas the female activists were seen as supporters standing by, sobbing to gain society's sympathy. Consequently, World Without War was launched during this time by activists who were critical of these binary visions, and wanted to reorganise the movement as a civil disobedience campaign. International solidarity helped us to anticipate what would happen and to brainstorm possible strategies for the next step. On the one hand, it was surprising that most conscientious objection movements in other geographical areas ran into similar problems at certain stages of the movement, but strangely, on the other hand, the fact that we had in common these critiques and challenges was also a little comforting for us.

We invited WRI staff member Andreas Speck to Korea again for our very first nonviolence training in summer 2004 and — 10 years later — we now have our own team of Korean trainers. In addition, we attended WRI's triennial seminar in Germany in 2006, where we got motivated to challenge war profiteers. A year later we launched a new campaign, Weapon Zero, to monitor Korea's arms trade and munitions industry and to focus on the issue of war profiteering. Currently, calling for a ban on cluster munitions, carrying out our Stop the Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (ADEX) campaign, and blocking tear gas exports to Bahrain are our core activities. Through international solidarity we learned, and we were inspired.

Our experience shows the importance of international solidarity and its power. If we did not receive AFSC's and WRI's help, especially in the beginning of this movement, there is no telling what our movement would have looked like now. The situation in each country and each stage or period may differ, of course, but the experience and skill of the people and groups that have walked with us until now served as a useful guide for beginners like us. Their help allowed us to foresee some of the challenges ahead of us and enabled us to carry out our actions thoughtfully and strategically.

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