

## OTHER NATIONS

ican lawyers as "carpetbagging." Yet some good may have come from the lawyers' greed. Galanter concludes that their sudden arrival in Bhopal "blazed a trail that the Indian government followed," forcing the authorities to take charge of a situation that they otherwise might have avoided.

### *Democracy for South Korea?*

"The 1985 Parliamentary Election in South Korea," by B. C. Koh, in *Asian Survey* (Sept. 1985), University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif. 94720.

On February 12, 1985, more than 20 million South Koreans (about 85 percent of all eligible voters) went to the polls—the highest turnout in 27 years. There they elected to the country's National Assembly 148 candidates from President Chun Doo Hwan's ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP), 67 from the New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP), and 61 from other parties.

Although the DJP did prevail, Koh, a political scientist at the University of Illinois, argues that the election constituted a "vote of no confidence" in President Chun's regime. During the first election under Chun in 1981, his DJP made an exceptionally strong showing, with victories for all but two of its 92 candidates. "Anything falling below the 1981 benchmark," writes Koh, "would signal dissatisfaction." A breakdown of last year's election results demonstrated that the ruling party fared worst among highly educated voters and politically sophisticated urban folk. In South Korea's five largest cities, where 42 percent of all the votes were cast, the NKDP opposition party, headed by Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, outperformed the DJP by better than a 4 to 3 margin; its victory was especially pronounced in Seoul and Kwangju. (Korean journalists dubbed the phenomenon *yado yoch'on*, or "opposition in cities, government in villages.") In terms of the overall popular vote, the NKDP garnered 29.2 percent versus the DJP's 35.3 percent.

So what? Koh contends that the NKDP has effectively "challenged the legitimacy" of Chun's government—a feat that is especially surprising since the coalition did not make its political debut until less than a month before the election. Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung had been barred from political activity until November 1984, when Chun lifted the ban. Subsequently, the group established itself as Chun's chief opposition.

The emergence of the NKDP as the "number one opposition party" could have far-reaching effects for South Korea, Koh maintains. The Chun government must now face a "challenger," not just a docile "sparring partner." A real two-party system could well develop. And Koh expects the role of the National Assembly to change: Now that the NKDP controls more than one-third of the legislative seats, it can unilaterally convene the assembly, move to dismiss a member, and veto constitutional amendments. Consequently the assembly will likely take a more active role in shaping future policies rather than merely rubber-stamping Chun's proposals.

True democracy in South Korea still "remains a destination," Koh holds. But the recent election results, largely unexamined in the Western press, do appear to have moved the nation "a step closer to that elusive goal."