

Chileans in midst of silent turmoil

By GARY NORRIS
Of the Emerald



Photo by Greg Gadowski

Enrique Kirberg, a former professor in Chile, outlined the reform of Chile's universities under Pres. Salvadore Allende - reforms which he said were later overturned by the government that ousted the former ruler.

Political and cultural hope had characterized the Allende regime, but a lack of it now dominates the country, three exiled Chileans told a University law school audience Wednesday night.

Referring to the mistreatment and disappearance of dissenter's in Chile today, Eugenio Velasco, former dean of the law school at the University of Chile, told the group Chileans at first denied, then ignored the problems. "That's the tragedy of Chile," he said.

"I voted for Allende, even though I disagreed with his policies during the last year of his regime," Velasco said. "But I could sleep with the problems. I argued about politics with my friends and we

stayed friends. But all that has disappeared now," Velasco said.

"President Pinoche thought our constitution was not very democratic," Verasco said. "He thought human rights were not worth the paper they were written on."

"We've had thousands of people killed and tortured," said Velasco, "and thousands of women have been raped. But we now have the most perfect system in Chile," he added sarcastically.

Velasco said a "culture of silence," pervades public life in Chile, and related the case of a woman whose husband had been arrested for curfew violation.

According to Velasco, the woman's husband was arrested, by three soldiers, who then raped the woman and burned her with a hot iron.

Velasco said he took the woman's case to the Chilean Su-

preme Court, and that the justices complained about the soldiers acts to President Pinoche. Pinoche then called the soldiers' commanding officer, according to Velasco, and while the judges were listening on other phones, was told that the woman was mistaken. Velasco said Pinoche then told the judges that the incident had never occurred.

Enrique Kirberg, of the state technical university in Santiago, said the reform of Chile's exclusive, class-based universities ended with Allende's overthrow.

Kirberg said during Allende's regime entrance requirements were modified to allow less privileged students to enroll, and that night classes and high school equivalency courses were offered to workers at the factories or mines where they worked. Kirberg said enrollment of middle and lower

class students climbed from a low of 4 percent to 23 percent at the time of the coup that overthrew Allende.

"When Pinoche came to power the university was surrounded and bombed with heavy artillery," Kirberg said. "30 percent of the faculty was fired and thousands of students were expelled," continued Kirberg. "I was arrested and put in a concentration camp for over two years."

Kirberg claimed the Chilean government has made no effort to reveal the whereabouts of over 2,500 missing persons, including priests and lawyers.

"Not even the Church has escaped," Kirberg said. "Many priests and nuns have been imprisoned. All organs of the mass media not sympathetic to the government have had their presses confiscated or destroyed."

CLASSIFIEDS

686-4343

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