

Sociologist decries Pinochet regime

By Maile Field
Emerald Contributor

Sociologist German Correa Diaz said during a visit to the University Wednesday that the removal of Chilean President Augusto Pinochet and the leader's regime is an essential step toward democratization of the South American country.

Diaz spoke to about 75 students and faculty members during a forum sponsored by Council for Human Rights in Latin America, Latin American Support Committee and the ASUO.

Diaz, a vice president of Isquierda Unida (United Left), Chile's opposition coalition, also called for the abolishment of the constitution that Pinochet's government adopted in 1980.

A constitutional clause calling for a plebiscite in Chile in 1988 has many pondering the changes that might result, regardless of whether or not Pinochet is confirmed.

Diaz, who is internationally known as a consultant on social planning issues, said even if the proposed plebiscite were to put Pinochet out of power, the constitution would retain the leader for another year. Pinochet would also continue to preside over a national security council in charge of the armed forces in Chile.

"The constitution is conceived for dictatorship," Diaz said, explaining that after a defeat in a plebiscite, Pinochet would



German Correa Diaz

still be able to select one-third of the members of congress. The remaining two-thirds would be elected at large. Any constitutional reform would depend on a two-thirds majority vote in congress, therefore, no changes toward democracy would be likely until congressional terms expired, he said. Consequently, no real change could be made until 1997.

Although the immediate goal

of Isquierda Unida is to remove the Pinochet regime, the coalition's plans include creation of a civilian government afterward that could survive, according to Diaz. "We have to democratize the armed forces themselves," he said, pointing to examples in neighboring countries Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, which have "fragile and unstable

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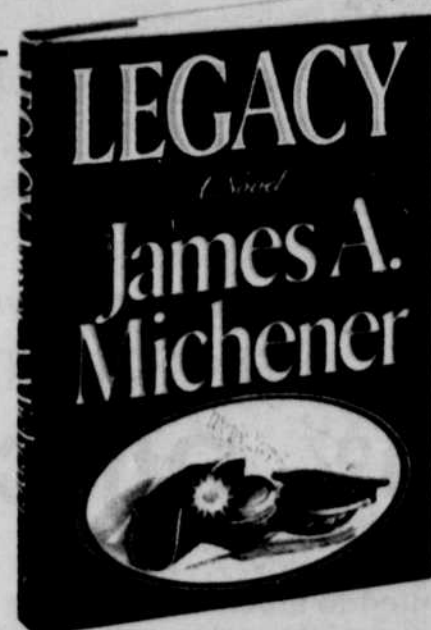
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