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B-2996
07 DEC 1971

SUBJECT: IFSHIN, David (NL)

1. Attached for your retention is a translation of an article which appeared in El Popular, a newspaper in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 15 October 1971 concerning the comments made by David IFSHIN, former president of the United States National Student Association, to a group of University of Uruguay students during an illegal rally held in Montevideo on 8 October 1971, "Che Guevarra" Day.

2. IFSHIN commented on the U.S. student movement; its opposition to the Vietnam War; its support of Blacks, university reform, the Attica incident, Angela DAVIS and the Black Panthers; and on the general impressions of Latin America held by U.S. citizens.

3. For additional information furnished your Bureau on IFSHIN, please see our 26 May 1971 memorandum, Subject as above.

Attachment: a/s [redacted] H

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CONVERSATION WITH U.S. STUDENT IFSHIN REPORTED .

[Interview with National Committee Member of the Association of American Students David Ifshin; Montevideo, Uruguay, El Popular, Spanish, 15 October 1971, p 23]

Hours before the government, in one more demonstration of its hatred of liberties and its scorn for rights and constitutional rules, expelled him from the country (the only Americans acceptable in the eyes of the government are inspectors from the IMF or agents of the CIA), we had the opportunity to chat with David Ifshin, former president of the National Association of American Students (grouping student associations of 500 of the 800 universities in his country), who visited Uruguay after participating in the Congress of Solidarity with Vietnam, which was organized in Santiago, Chile by the IUS and the WFDY. Ifshin, who has visited the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and who currently belongs to the national committee of the Association of American Students, participated at Santiago as an observer for the association.

Question: What are the most important characteristics of the American student movement?

Answer: Until now, the student movement has centered its efforts especially on the struggle against the war in Vietnam and for integration of the black people. Another subject which mobilizes American students is the question of university reform.

Question: What do student demands concerning the reform consist of?

Answer: It is being demanded that the existing competitive system in the universities for achieving better qualifications and better positions be done away with. This is the present system, and it represents an application of the success theory to the university environment. This theory was very important as a factor for mobilization. But it was understood that what is behind this system is the capitalist structure, which finds expression through competition, as in racial discrimination or in the war in Vietnam. Developments in the struggles have brought the students and

~~the black population to understand that the struggle for partial objectives~~
has no future and that it is a question of involving the entire social and economic structure. One of the important elements in helping to clarify the issue was the slaughter at Attica.

Question: Was this reflected in the movement?

Answer: There is one chief contradiction within the students' and people's movement. Having a greater awareness of what the real problem behind each of these expressions is, and beginning to face up to a general questioning of the capitalist structure, there still exist sectors which center their struggle around a particular demand -- some for improvements, others for women's rights, others for the war in Vietnam, and others for

university reform. This means that despite a growing awareness of the total problem, difficulties which hold back the development of the movement remain due to this attention to partial demands.

Question: How is this problem met?

Answer: The struggle against the war in Vietnam has been taken at the center, and through this an attempt is made to unify the movement. Last spring one of the largest demonstrations for putting a stop to the war in Vietnam took place. Even the reactionary American press admitted that more than half a million persons took part in this demonstration. Students, workers, union leaders, and even important personalities, congressmen, and senators took part. It was called by the National Action Coalition for Peace and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, which not only called for the demonstration, but also for the application of civic disobedience measures. I mention in passing that the association of students belongs to both coalitions.

At the head of the demonstration was the Truckers' Union, one of the largest in the country, which takes part in demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, as well as many other unions. In addition — and for the first time — veterans of the Vietnam War, in uniform, took part in the demonstration for 5 days, opposing the government and the Supreme Court. This is the first time in the history of the United States that war veterans have participated against a war that was still going on. This protest demonstration continued for a week and was headlined nationally. The Supreme Court ordered the veterans to withdraw. They refused, and Nixon did not feel encouraged to give the police a public order to throw them out by force, although that was the order requested. There was one point at which the police refused

to repress the veterans. For that reason -- because that atmosphere existed -- Nixon did not have the courage to give a public order for them to be thrown out. The veterans camped at night in a park near the Supreme Court. This demonstration took place in Washington. Many of the veterans who took part in it had been crippled in the war.

Even the reactionary press commented in its headlines that the war veterans disregarded the Supreme Court. Many of these veterans appeared voluntarily to accuse themselves as war criminals for having been in Vietnam.

It is becoming understood more and more that the war in Vietnam is not an isolated problem, but only the most severe and the most concrete example of American imperialism: something that can happen in Vietnam, as in Bolivia, Uruguay, or another part of the world.

Question: Particularly, in Latin America...?

Answer: Especially at this time, the subject of Latin America is entering a crucial period, according to [copy unclear; possibly intended to read: as is understandable]. The U.S. Government has not defined a policy

for Latin America because it finds no way in which to explain it to the American people. The movement is trying to create awareness, so that people will understand the imperialist maneuver before action takes place and not afterward, as happened in Vietnam.

I think that the conditions are being created and that we are arriving at a point at which it will be possible to restrain aggression, for example, of the Santo Domingo type. Nixon is keeping the U.S. policy more and more a secret and deceiving the American people, because the people's movement is becoming a force capable of checking aggression. The government is going to have think twice before carrying out an attack or an invasion. Even

the U.S. military power has been broken. The Army wants to get out of Vietnam, despite the fact that 10 years ago it wanted to go into Vietnam. It must be said that the morale of the soldiers in Vietnam has hit bottom. More than 20 percent of the soldiers are drug addicts. Of course, Nixon lies to the people. He is trying to use not soldiers, but mechanized warfare: bombing raids, for example, in order to avoid casualties and the participation of soldiers in combat. He thinks that he can keep the war more or less secret, to the extent that there are no dead soldiers. Our work is directed toward making people understand that the problem is not one of dead soldiers but of imperialist aggression.

Question: What is the government doing about the movement?

Answer: Nixon responds on many levels. The first thing was to say that the movement was violent, irresponsible, and controlled by foreign powers; that is, the use of anticommunism. But it is very easy to answer this, because all the violence of the movement cannot be compared to U.S. violence in 1 day of war in Vietnam. I must say that the attacks against the left have strengthened the left.

In addition, they have again had recourse to supposedly liberal methods, saying that the United States is a free country and that everyone can express himself as long as he is not violent, also that anyone who tries to do something is an extremist. They also accuse the leaders with criminal charges, as in the case of Angela Davis or Bobby Seale, one of the leaders of the Black Panthers, who was jailed with the other leaders, and who was released recently. They try to isolate the leaders of the movement in addition to attempting to frighten the movement.

They also make it necessary to divert forces, since the struggle to

liberate the prisoners draw off forces, requires such effort, money, and so on.

Question: What do the American people think of Latin America?

Answer: The American people know very little about Latin America. They have been indoctrinated with false ideas. Many of my leftist friends did not understand why I was coming to Latin America. Only one sector of the left is really aware of what is happening in Latin America. For that reason I think it is very important to coordinate our forces and our movements in order to make more information available concerning what is happening. I think we have much to learn from Latin American experiments such as Popular Unity in Chile, the Broad Front in Uruguay, and the National Assembly of the Argentines. Many people in the United States think Latin America is limited to Bolivia, Cuba, and Mexico. I believe that the meeting in Chile was very important, but I think that more open contacts must be made in order to make better coordination easier.

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