

American Students of Russian Revolution

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THE NEWS OF THE FOUR deaths at Kent State University, forty miles away, hit our campus at lunchtime on Monday, May 4, 1970. Earlier, in the morning, our pacifists' and radicals' efforts to call a universitywide strike on the Cambodian issue had not been a success. Most of the Case Western Reserve students, even those who opposed the war, had wanted to finish the school year. Then the news from Kent changed everything.

Suddenly there was anger, as well as sorrow. Many afternoon classes were canceled. Some two hundred students carrying red, or black, or peace flags and signs squatted in the middle of Euclid Avenue to block it where it crossed our campus at its busiest. Hundreds more milled around on the sidewalks, watching the sit-in and the police and waiting. I strolled over to observe the scene and then, at 4:30, walked to my classroom, hardly expecting to find any students there.

I was surprised to find about two-thirds of the class, ready for a lecture and a discussion. This was a relevant class, the students said. Not as relevant as a chemistry course, some of them joked, but relevant just the same.

It was a survey course in Russian revolutionary movements in recent centuries. Beginning in early February with the peasant-Cossack revolts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, working

our way through the intellectual outbreaks of the nineteenth, covering the revolution of 1905, we had by May finally come to 1917. Today the schedule called for my own reminiscences concerning the Kerensky-Lenin struggle. During the rest of May, till the examination, we would deal with the Russian civil war, the Communist victory, and the petering-out of the revolution in the New Economic Policy and Lenin's death.

"Yes," the students demanded, "what about 1917 in Russia?" How would you compare it with 1970 in America?" There were twenty-odd members of the class, some of them quite odd indeed. While the majority were fairly silent moderates and there were even a few conservatives, at least one-fourth were articulate radicals. Several called themselves revolutionaries.

Certain of these belonged to organizations; others were flaming individualists. One long-hair said he was a socialist, but not a Marxist. "I guess I am a Utopian Socialist," he said to me. "No, don't take me for a revolutionary. A radical, you think? Let's say radically oriented." He was bright but confused, and so was his girlfriend. Not enrolled in my class, she once accompanied him on a visit to my office and chimed in to describe herself as "against capitalism but for the system." Amused, he corrected her: "Capitalism is the system, honey."

Some of the activists were taking the course (as one moderate sneered) "for future reference." A few nonradicals were Jewish students whose parents or grandparents had come from Russia. Curious about their elders' origins, they had chosen the course to learn about Russia in her entirety rather than specifically about her revolutions. One colorful descendant of Russian emigrés, who was not a Jew, was interested in the Communist Revolution as a heartwarming human phenomenon, he said. A gentle-faced, curly-haired WASP joined the class to study Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin; he was an unaffiliated anarchist. A Trotskyite girl vainly sought in my lectures confirmation of her idol's theory of permanent revolution.

At the outset, I had told the class that I was a long-time student of, and a shirker from, wars and revolutions; that I disapproved of both. Wars and revolutions involve violence, and I was against violence. As a youth I had despised the Russian civil war no less than the First World War. I had been consistently against the Reds and the Whites because both meant coercion and bloodshed. I did participate in the Second World War as a matter of defense against Hitler. His success had originally been facilitated by Stalin, and by the West, and I blamed them both for the rise of the Nazis; but once the swastika threatened all of us, never mind the blame — all that mattered was humanity's survival. We had to fight for it.

A radical student spoke up: "So you do justify that war. Now about revolutions — aren't there any circumstances under which you would justify a revolution?"

"Reluctantly, yes. A revolution may be justified by some of the conditions under which it flares up."

"Such as?"

"Such as the intolerable conditions of Russian serfdom, of the feudal regime, against which the peasant and Cossack rebels arose under Stepan Razin in the 1670s and under Yemelian Pugachev a century later."

"And in 1917?"

"The first revolution of that year, in March, was justified. The second, in November, was not — and I will tell you why not in this course."

"And don't we have intolerable conditions in America now?"

"Not intolerable enough to justify a revolution or any other violence on or off our campuses."

Later, after class, another student showed me a campus Maoist publication from which he quoted solemnly:

Capitalist society is violent by its very nature. The exploitation of workers, who are forced to live on the edge of poverty, is a form of violence. To assume that wage-slavery is not violent is patently false.

I protested politely, but his Maoist mind was closed.

The Trotskyites and the anarchists among these students listened somewhat more readily. By all campus radicals I was naturally enough pegged at once as a bourgeois historian and a weaseling political scientist, yet (by some, at least) also as a man who had been around, had seen a revolution or two, and so could be argued with. "You don't dismiss our questions out of hand, and still you don't try to flatter us," complimented a Trotskyite.

But a short time earlier another young Trotskyite, a girl, had written to me from Arizona after reading my *New York Times Magazine* article on Lenin (in connection with the centenary of his birth): "Sir, you are a gross apologist for the capitalist ruling class and a crude scholar."

II

IT WAS INTRIGUING to watch just what parts of this Russian-Revolution course appealed to the students most. The radicals and the liberals, for instance, chose our discussion of the famous definition of progress by the nineteenth-century revolutionary theorist Peter Lavrov. Progress, he declared, is the condition when enough "haves" begin to feel guilty about their wealth or mere comforts and wish to

share these with the "have-nots." "That's us!" said the students proudly. They loved the old Russian term *kayushchiyesia dvoriane*, that is, "repentant nobleman" — repentant about their worldly goods and privileges enjoyed while the lower classes suffered. These American sons and daughters of prosperous business and professional families were full of revulsion for their accustomed affluence, for their consumer goods, for access to the best schools, for their dancing and music and art lessons, and posh vacations.

But, unlike the old Russian case of intellectual repentance, there was also among these young Americans a rebellion against their parents' and teachers' pressure upon them to achieve high marks and eventual admission to the country's best colleges. And so, on reaching such campuses, some of the brightest dropped out, refusing to be high-strung racehorses any longer. Many such dropouts ceased studying but stayed on or near the campuses, where they sought righteous refuge by becoming radicals or pretending to be radicals.

Once they turned into radicals, they had youth's unshakable faith in the rightness of whatever they did, however they did it. They wanted to achieve their aims immediately. A woman graduate student, who had grown up in a poor family that happened to live in a well-to-do neighborhood, said to me:

I know them. All their young lives they got whatever they demanded, and pronto. Their parents saw to their gratification. And these children of the rich, far more than we of the poor, have been spoiled by the instant pleasure given by so many gadgets in their comfy houses and generally in their lives. Multiply instant coffee to a thousand instant these-and-those. Elevate the modern conveniences into the latest luxuries, all served to them forthwith, whenever they push the button. Once their parents reached the point of what they, the well-heeled, wanted, they went beyond that point to

please their darlings. And now the darlings are amazed and indignant that they cannot have peace in Vietnam and social justice all over the world at this very moment, by pressing the button of the strike, the sit-in, the confrontation, the rock-throwing at the police pigs.

She went on:

They know they are a minority on any campus and that the majority knows this, but they claim far greater numbers than they constitute, and they act accordingly. They impose and intimidate. The majority tries to keep out of the activists' way, and so the campus becomes seemingly radical. But the activists, in all their passion or even fury, are too intelligent to mistake the others' fear for agreement. In fact, agreement is seldom sought by the radicals, so long as enough of the bystanders either keep quiet or, still better, give their timid assent to a few issues at least, such as the issue of Vietnam.

This was then a picture of the "repentant noblemen" in my class, with their naive presumption of kinship between themselves and Russia's idealistic *Narodniki* of a century ago. The sober truth was, and casually in one of my lectures I told them so, that the only similarity between these young Americans of 1970 and their Russian predecessors of 1870 was that both groups constituted only a small minority, not just of the population at large but even of the intellectuals of their countries and eras.

I expressed my view that in most revolutions activists constitute only about 2 percent of a given population:

Another 18 percent join for two main reasons: some of them have grievances besides those presented by the activists, usually far less radical than the demands and slogans of the 2 percent, and others are bored and find here a chance for excitement, or they are curious rather than furious, as they go out to see the turmoil but soon find

themselves drawn into the vortex. Much to their own surprise and later regret, they act with the mob, and they are shot at or arrested. The vast majority, some 80 percent, are against a rebellion or other large-scale disturbance. They stay at home, hoping that it all will pass away and life as usual will resume. But often, in time, most or all of the 80 percent do find themselves sucked into the disorders. They are forced to take sides, to sign petitions and shout slogans without believing in them. Such is the history of many so-called popular or revolutionary movements in Europe or elsewhere.

None of the radicals in the class argued against this view. Moreover, I later heard that among themselves even certain Maoists on the campus repeated this bit of analysis and the statistics with some approving chuckles.

III

AS THEY STUDIED the long, broad gamut of Russian revolutions, many of my students, whatever their convictions, were fascinated by the problem of leadership. They pondered and asked: Can a man with all the natural attributes of a leader win by just his daring, fearlessness, charisma? Or does he have to add education — and acquired political skills? The personalities of the peasant-Cossack leaders Razin and Pugachev riveted their attention. Here were true masters of the masses, at the head of vast hordes taking one tsarist city after another, yet never able to come anywhere near Moscow, and finally crushed, their nondescript armies defeated, they themselves captured, tortured, executed. And why? Because their inherent talent for leadership was not enough. They did not have the schooling needed to be strategists and to win against the better-trained, better-led tsarist armies.

On the other hand, there were the noblemen-officers of the Decembrist revolt of 1825 against Nicholas I. In the

history of revolutions, who could be more idealistic and, at the same time, better educated than they? But they lost — largely because they had not in good season really thought of propagandizing and otherwise preparing their regiments. They simply commanded the soldiers to follow them to the Senate Plaza in St. Petersburg, where, as the officers lost their nerve, the soldiers stood by ineptly. Had those soldiers been prepared ideologically, they might have surged into action, sweeping their indecisive officers with them and developing their own leadership, until victory was won.

All such historical lessons were adapted by my students into the latest American forms and terms. The radicals came up to my office to talk, some of them to admit: "Yes, we try to be leaders, but just don't have the larger strategy needed." They were children of the TV age, who had not read enough. Unlike the old-time Russian intellectuals, they had no patience to read heavy volumes. They were neither knowledgeable nor ruthless enough to be real leaders of the masses, the sort that Lenin and his underground-bred elite learned to be, from life and from books.

I asked them: "And where were the American masses they would lead?" America's blacks comprised only some 12 percent of the nation, and the most militant of them — the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army — plainly rejected the leadership of white radicals. Labor, on whom Marx and Lenin taught the world's revolutionaries to depend — ah, yes, labor indeed! Look at it; look at those hard-hats acting like the antirevolutionary goons in the Greek film *Z*, a favorite point of reference among young American radicals.

My leftist students agreed. They compared the construction workers in modern America to the Cossacks in tsarist Russia: after once leading popular revolts, the Cossacks — bought off by the tsars with sundry privileges — transformed into the most zealous and brutal defenders of the throne. In the civil war of 1918–20, only a tiny minority of the Cossacks fought on

the Red side; the overwhelming mass of them were Whites. "So much like American labor, shifting from its old rebel role to smugness," said one student.

Neither the conservatives and the moderates among the students on the one hand, nor the radicals on the other, believed that a collaboration of disparate social elements against the Establishment could have long-range success. The Trotskyites alone thought that some of the middle-class people whom the pacifists were then winning over to activism would in time become radicalized. But, on the whole, the students agreed that on too many historic occasions the middle classes could not be counted on for any meaningful social revolutions. At the very start of our course, the students noted that one of the chief reasons for the defeat of Ivan Bolotnikov's revolt of 1606-7 was that peasant leader's misplaced trust in his allies on the Right, the petty service gentry of Ryazan and Tula: at a crucial point the gentry wavered and crossed over to the tsar. One of my young radicals muttered: "Don't trust any part of the middle or upper class, ever! They'll sell out a true revolutionary cause any time. But any time!" After class a moderate student gave this verdict: "Middle-class liberals shouldn't join ranks with the extremists on the Left. The men of Ryazan and Tula were so wise in quitting Bolotnikov."

And yet the students shook their heads disparagingly at the consistent failure of old-time Russian liberals to share responsibility for the state and society. This was offered to them on a silver platter, by the tsar's ministers Sergei Witte and Peter Stolypin in 1905-6. Reformers also held power in the spring and summer of 1917.

Turning this into modern American terms, the students were skeptical that our nation would escape further polarization. One remarked: "In our own history we have done only a little better than Russia's liberals. The New Dealers of FDR's time were practically the only American liberals ever to hold power firmly and carry out reforms decently without any

serious hindrance from either side, Right or Left. The Johnson-Humphrey liberals negate their good domestic policy by that stupid war in Vietnam. And now true liberalism has no chance in America. From now on we will be torn between the extreme Left and the extreme Right until a horrible civil war does us part."

The radicals in my class were concerned with the Pyrrhic victory that might be theirs even if they did succeed. The two textbooks for the course used this term to describe the aftermath of the People's Will terroristic triumph in March 1881: after many tries the terrorists finally assassinated Tsar Alexander II — only to find that a mere few hours before his death the sovereign had signed a document promising a constitution; only to see the nation plunged into a long reign of suppression and other reaction under his son and heir, Alexander III. "Backlash, huh?" my Americans mused. "And so senselessly, when a genuine liberal phase in Russian history was about to dawn!"

IV

SOME TROTSKYITES AND MAOISTS in my class and others on the campus went so far as to think that the entire post-Lenin phase of Soviet history was one huge, monstrous backlash.

A leading campus Maoist (short-haired and neatly dressed), not a member of my class, approached me after a lecture by a guest leftist from another Midwestern university. He wanted to discuss the few remarks I had made in the question-and-answer period. "You were right," he sadly noted, "when you corrected that visiting fire-eater about the triumph of Marxist ideas in today's Russia. Of course, there is not a whiff of Marxism in Brezhnev's Russia. There is a new class society of the exploited and their exploiters. I know you are not a Marxist, but you know your Marx, so tell me," he sounded deeply worried, "what has gone wrong in Russia? What happened?" I smiled: "Human nature happened. Human nature is stronger than dogma. The same is or will

be true in China and Cuba, too." He turned away from me in disgust.

The campus radicals did have a surprising faith in the goodness of mankind, or at least pretended to. The sweetness of human beings would create a just, halcyon, classless society! "What am I getting from your course? A sense of futility," my Utopian Socialist said. "And yet, not quite. In my low moments I curse both the Establishment and its opponents for the crass individuals and groups they are. But then I urge myself on; I say I must fight on, with the lesser of the two evils against the greater. I find myself using the few positive points I am learning about the Russian revolutionaries in your lectures."

"For instance?"

"Well, I am an active pacifist, you know. I am on the Strike Committee. The other week, right after the Kent shootings, I was addressing a huge rally. There were perhaps five thousand roaring people there. I had to present a resolution and speak on its behalf. From your course I remembered how Lenin had prepared such maneuvers — how meticulous he was about every line, every word. Organization, organization! 'Give me perfect organization of professional revolutionaries, and I'd turn the whole world upside down.' That's what he said. And he did it by organizing every detail."

"And did you succeed?"

"No," he laughed ruefully. "We are not truly organized. Nothing like those Russian revolutionaries of 1917 or even the disastrous 1905. When we draw the people to our side, we lose them right away. We called on those five thousand students to return the next day for assignments and further work. You know how many showed up? Only some seven hundred. And now, two weeks later, we're down to about a hundred activists, if that."

Soon, because of the Kent tragedy, our university closed a few weeks short of the full semester. Before my course was terminated, I would occasionally reverse the usual process of our class discussion: we would begin with a modern American revolutionary phenomenon (being rele-

vant with a bang!) and compare it with a phase of Russian history. Once, as we were talking about the Students for a Democratic Society and their splinter groups in terms of the nineteenth-century Russian revolutionaries, a student remarked that a faction of the SDS had actually named itself *Narodniki*. The question then came up: what faction was it? Not the Weathermen by any chance? The class agreed that there was a vast difference between the old terrorist *Narodniki*, who finally assassinated Alexander II, and the Weathermen. The Russian terrorists had a program, modeling a democratic republic, to follow their takeover of Russia, whereas the Weathermen lacked a program except to dynamite today's society.

Here the gentle-faced anarchist spoke up: "But having no program is a program in itself."

Then this dialogue ensued:

"All right, how do you envisage our society after the Weathermen blow it to smithereens? How will the survivors, if any, live with one another?" I asked.

"Each one will do his own thing, that's how."

"But how will the survivors interact if each one does his own thing with no regard for anyone else's thing? There are today twenty-four men and women in this classroom and perhaps twenty-four different philosophies. Well, maybe twenty-one. If the whole world is like that and if each person does his own thing, there can be no consensus, no majority to make for a more or less functioning society or even a determined minority to lead the majority."

"Anarchy is the mother of order," came the rejoinder.

"But what kind of order with everyone doing his own thing, which may well be murder, rape, arson, or another plesantry?"

"You've got something there," the gentle anarchist grew reflective.

Nevertheless, two days later he submitted a term paper in which he reaffirmed his trust in human nature and in how it

will inevitably show its nobility, its selflessness, once the smoke of destruction has cleared. His paper was on Prince Kropotkin's idea of harmonious communes into which a postrevolutionary world was to evolve peacefully. It was a naive and touching paper, with soft sentiment prevailing over hard facts. The paean to the great Russian anarchist was based on his *Conquest of Bread*, written in 1888, when Kropotkin was forty-six. The Kent bloodshed, creating the disarray on our campus, prevented me from seeing this student once more to tell him that Kropotkin had certainly lost faith in such communes by the time of his death in 1921. But I suppose that, had there been such a meeting and conversation, the student would have determinedly argued that Kropotkin was right in 1888 and wrong by 1921.

V

BY FAR THE MOST picturesque radical in the class was Dema — a name I recognized as short for Vadim, clearly a Russian name. I had heard of him for quite some time and was delighted to find him in my course on Russian revolutions. There he sprawled in a seat too small for his large frame. His face was Nordic, his light-brown mane and beard unkempt.

When I came to his name in the first roll call, I said: "Your family name was well known in old Russia. Your folks came from Russia?"

"Yeah," he grunted.

"They were noblemen of German origin," I persisted, "prominent in the tsar's navy."

He grinned but said nothing.

But later that day, coming to my office for a chat, he opened up. Indeed, he said, his grandfathers and his granduncles had served in the Imperial navy in high capacities. His family's last Russian home was at Sevastopol, the Black Sea naval base.

"They had to leave everything behind when they fled to Turkey," he said. "They couldn't take with them even any family

records. So I've been reading up on Russia and the Revolution to discover who I am."

His father and an uncle, on reaching America as young men, continued the family tradition by entering the United States Navy. His uncle was killed some years back as a test pilot. His father was still with the navy, teaching at Annapolis.

Other students told me that Dema began his years on our campus as a conventional lad with tame ideas and short hair. He was even in the R.O.T.C. His nonconformity came under the influence of another student. "A girl?" I asked. "No, a man, a very strong personality. A Maoist who moved here from Canada, not to study really, but to convert our students. He is no longer here."

Now a convinced revolutionary, Dema could be objective at least about old-time Russian revolutionaries if not about himself and his new friends. In our first test he wrote a superb two-page analysis of the failure of all the Russian revolutionaries from 1825 to 1917 to recognize the peasant's essential petty-bourgeois ambition to have a farm of his own. The revolutionaries over-idealized the village *mir* or commune, which the peasant hated but which the revolutionaries told him to cherish as a sure road to socialism. Since it was the best essay in the class, I asked Dema to read it aloud. This he did, with just a touch of shyness.

Dema belonged to no revolutionary group — Trotskyite, Maoist, or what have you. He was a free-lance radical, going where the tumult was, very much in evidence in the marches and picket lines after the Cambodia-Kent outburst. He believed in revolutionary spontaneity, which he extolled at the top of his voice.

In contrast, the outstanding female revolutionary in the class, a tiny, sunshiny redhead named Gale, favored a definite creed and organization. She was a leading spirit in the local Young Socialist Alliance, a Trotskyite formation. In my course, she said to me, she resented the "unobjective" treatment of Trotsky in one of the books assigned to the class — Bertram D. Wolfe's *Three Who Made a*

Revolution. I suspect that she winced when I characterized Trotsky as “a genius of a kind but a fool.”

In early March she ran for president of the student government as the Trotskyites’ candidate. Someone brought to class a leaflet outlining her program: “End all ties of the university with the F.B.I. and C.I.A.; allow no more spying or maintaining files on student and faculty groups and meetings. Get city cops off campus; abolish University Circle Police. Give full civil liberties, including freedom of political association, to all students and faculty; guarantee the right to participate in movements to change the university without fear of reprisals.” She lost, but later boasted to me that she had not done badly: “I came in second in a field of five.” She half-apologized for demanding abolition of the university police: “This was not expressed right. Of course, I am for the police as the guardians of our safety. I am against their constant spying on us, taking secret tapes and notes of our meetings.”

Gale was very proud that her fellow Trotskyites on the campus, though small in number, were clearly rich in the organizational talent needed for the Peace Strike after May 4. Indeed, her handful showed themselves the most organized and disciplined of the leftists at the university. They had opposed the Euclid Avenue sit-in, which they now claimed had been led by a few extremists. These had violated a nonconfrontation agreement made by the all-campus Strike Committee.

She and her friends were against “needless” or “meaningless” confrontations, quoting to this effect not Trotsky but Lenin during his Swiss exile years. One day I cited to her a comment by a friend of mine, a wise Clevelander who had been a student radical back in the 1930s, that her group was made up of “right-wing Trotskyites.” She was outraged. No radical likes to be called right-wing anything. But she and her friends did believe in subtle, insidious work with people to the right of them. They pictured their task as rallying and radicalizing the middle-of-the-roaders who today might be joining the peace

forces but tomorrow might join the leftists on a grander scale.

On one occasion I asked Gale about her background. “My father is a psychologist,” she said. “As a young man he was a Norman Thomas socialist, but by now he has mellowed into just a liberal. Votes the Democratic ticket and all that.”

Gale’s foes on the Left charged that she and all the other Trotskyites on campus were scandalously mellow. These critics were mainly Maoists, belonging to an organization called “American Student Movement (Anti-Imperialist).” I was told that Case Western Reserve and Kent State were the only two campuses in the Middle West where these particular groups existed. “A man brought it here a year or two ago,” I was informed, “from Canada, where it is strong.” It turned out that this was the very man who had converted Dema, although Dema did not stay a Maoist, becoming a freewheeling revolutionary instead.

The Maoists (some of them in my class) insisted that Gale and all the other peaceniks concentrated on pacifism without properly attacking imperialism as the cause of wars. These Maoists charged that the Trotskyites and all the other “opportunists” only “served imperialism and held back the people’s revolutionary struggle.” They branded all non-Maoist radical activity as a “Pro-Imperialist Peace Movement.” They, too, invoked Lenin to buttress their point.

In March the Maoists held on campus their “First National Conference of the American Student Movement (Anti-Imperialist).” For five consecutive evenings, their rallies stressed themes such as: “Support the National Liberation Struggle of the People of Palestine!!” “Support the National Liberation Struggle of the People of Quebec!!” “Support the Armed Agrarian Revolution in India!!” “Victory to the American Working Class!! Victory to the Heroic Afro-American People!!” “Long Live the People’s Republic of China, Bright Red Bastion of World Revolution!! Long Live Mao Tse-tung’s Thought, the Marxism-Leninism of Our Era!!” The an-

nouncements also carried a pithy anti-American quotation from Mao, along with his smiling portrait.

Throughout the academic year the Maoists published a mimeographed periodical, *Case Reserve Student*, at a nickel a copy. Buying an issue at a campus crossing from a co-ed whom I knew was Jewish, I scanned the pages until I paused at a fiery pro-Arab article. I asked the girl: "You believe this? You praise Nasser's soldiers and Arafat's terrorists as progressive forces, as the hope of humanity?"

She argued back fiercely, shrieking at me that the Israelis were a bunch of fascists, the Arabs were the only genuine socialists in the Middle East. Later, I heard that such pro-Arafat zealots sometimes come from passionate American Zionist families. Here was one more revolt of the young against their elders.

VI

BY THE SUMMER SESSION of 1970, the campus was markedly calmer. And as the students returned that September, their mood was quieter. Not exactly subdued, but sober, almost somber. Some observers later said that the Kent shootings had had their effect among the youth all over the country. There was anger, yes, but a certain amount of caution too. At Case Western Reserve, I remarked that hair was shorter and attire neater. Violence lessened. Even the Trotskyites spoke of "working through the system." One such young man said to me that he was not against the American Constitution; that it was in fact possible for American radicals to reshape this society by using the Constitution. This argument was similar to what Soviet dissidents were beginning to say about freeing Soviet society by insisting on the letter of the Soviet constitution.

And yet Dema and other extreme leftists were not for gradualism. They did not believe in the U.S. Constitution or in ringing any voters' doorbells. In their opinion, all this frenetic agitation to send doves to Congress would not change the system.

No matter who was sent to Congress, the result would be more tools of capitalism. "This Princeton idea to dismiss all classes for two weeks before the November elections is not a bad one," said Dema. "I think I'll take two weeks off myself. A lot of us will. But for our own purposes, not to push doorbells for politicians."

He had a contemptuous memory of the children's crusade in 1968 to elect Gene McCarthy. "But," I reminded him, "he did topple Lyndon Johnson for you." "Yeah, and what did we get instead — Nixon!" Humphrey would not have been the answer for him either. "Why don't you then have a candidate of your own?" Dema laughed: "Maybe Eldridge Cleaver!" In fact, Cleaver's name had been on an obscure radical ticket in 1968, but few even among radicals remembered this. "If we put him on a ticket in 1970 and he returns to America, he will be arrested right away. So what's the use?" No, he did not believe in any elections at all.

How did radicals on campus view their own future? Some saw it as martyrdom in the wake of an inevitable backlash. "A lot of us will be in American concentration camps," said Dema. He and others spoke of the camps used for the Japanese on the West Coast during World War II: "These are waiting for us!" They also talked of the special detention camps allegedly established at various strategic points in this country during the McCarthy era in the early 1950s. "They were made ready for immediate use, but then McCarthyism changed from an 'ism' to a 'wasm,' and so they were never activated," Dema assured me. "But they will be used once the hard-hat outbursts become a nationwide movement against us."

Radicals such as Dema were aware that somewhere in the government's files and perhaps in the hands of certain private zealots there were fairly complete and constantly growing dossiers on all young people like themselves. "We will all be rounded up, that is, those who don't flee or hide underground in time," said Dema. He sneered at those of his fellow students who were unduly optimistic, who said that

victory was around the corner, who were not at all prepared to face the backlash and the antiradical horrors it would bring. "We will have to have a lot of stamina to face arrests, repression, beatings, maybe death." Dema reveled in his doomsaying.

"But suppose both predictions miscarry? No radical victory right away, and no backlash either?" I asked. "What then? How do you picture your future then?"

He answered that he would keep on being a revolutionary but would have a professional career among the squares. "I will go on to graduate school. I'll study history.

Yes, history has always interested me. And then I'll become a professor while continuing my revolutionary activities. In your course I read that in Imperial Russia before 1917 there were such professors, members of the underground. Sure, there'll be some thin-ice years, but I'll make it. And the rest of us will, too. We'll reach our new world, far from your putrid hell."

Since 1971, I have not heard from or about Dema, but he may be on your campus, a prosperous and smug firebrand.