

Henry Kissinger had said, “*What in the name of God is strategic superiority?*” How should the historian understand him?

HENRY KISSINGER: That is absolutely correct. I do not believe that you can rely on a first-strike strategy as the defence against all contingencies. Again one has to consider this in the context of events. That remark was made in late June 1974 in Moscow, a month before Nixon was forced out of office. We found ourselves in the position of being harassed on *détente* at a time when we had absolutely no capacity for confrontation.

And I still believe this: I do not think it is possible to achieve the degree of strategic superiority that existed in the 1940s and '50s, such that we can rely on nuclear superiority to defend Europe and other areas of the world. I remind you that Reagan has never tired of pointing out in the last two or three years that we are not trying to win a war. In what way does that differ from what I said ten years earlier?

—*One of your most persistent and formidable critics, Senator Jackson, demanded to know why you hadn't sought lower limits from the Soviet Union, as he felt you should have. I thought you gave a very interesting answer to that on the way to Peking in 1974. You said this:*

“The only way we could have even talked about lower numbers was to drastically increase defence spending and to hold the increase for a number of years, long enough to convince the Soviets that we were going to drive the race through the ceiling with them.”

That sounds very like the Reagan programme today.

KISSINGER: Exactly correct. That is still my view.

THAT WAS ONE of the most creative periods in post-War diplomacy, and Kissinger is one of that diplomatic history's great public figures. Yet why did disenchantment with *détente* set in so early? Overall *détente*, Kissinger says, was “ground down between a liberal idealism unrelated to a concept of power and the liturgical anti-communism of the Right.”

But although we made our share of mistakes, Kissinger has said, the fundamental assault on *détente* was made by the Soviet Union; with the Soviet Cuban expeditionary forces in Angola and Ethiopia; their appearance in Aden; the Kremlin's encouragement of North Viet Nam's takeover of the South; the pressures on Poland; and the invasion of Afghanistan.

Détente had not deterred.

Over the next few years and the long agony for *détente* of the Carter Presidency, the strategic debate was powerfully shaped by forces associated with the Committee on the Present Danger—they would return quite a different answer to Henry Kissinger's question, “*What in the name of God is strategic superiority?*”

A second article in this series by Michael Charlton will be published in next month's ENCOUNTER.

The Witterings

Oh, there is withering all right: of that no doubt.
The bishop's deer-park under sea, and sucking out
The debris left behind excursion trips—
A trash of cockles, plastic water-wings, and bottled stout.

Seffrid's skeletal deer hoof-print the mud
At ebb, the Brimfast massacres, brick fields daubed in blood!
Where Poplars Seven with rape and mustard blow
Braccia's raiders fathomed under flood.

Beneath these footings lurk rich mysteries:
Ring-hoard has been found there, and the elder trees
Have felt the Saxon settler rasp his axe,
Shaded the Regni, sprawling at their ease.

Now autumn stubble burns: a spitting cage
Of thorns and hedgerows, black and sweet, engage,
With heaped-up skies bent westward, all downwind,
Dense with their anger, red in rage, in rage.

Patrick Garland

Marx's Friends & Comrades

The "Party" of Revolutionaries in Soho



IN THE YEARS following the 1848 revolutions on the continent, England was the main refuge for a great many exiles fleeing from repression, arrest, and sometimes imprisonment. From Paris to Moscow, from Brussels to Rome, a motley band of Hungarians, Poles, Russians, French and—the largest group of all—Germans, sailed up the Thames into the London mists by the boatload during 1849 and 1850. Though some moved on to a new life in America, most settled in England. There they felt free enough to hold their political and cultural meetings, and publish their radical views in their own newspapers (if they could afford to run a small press). A stalwart few even plotted, in smoky rooms above pubs in Leicester Square or Long Acre, yet another, and perhaps final, European revolution. Charles Dickens wrote in mock-fearful fashion of such exile activities (in his periodical *Household Words*, in April 1851):

“Conspiracies of a comprehensive character are being hatched in certain back parlours, in certain back streets behind Mr. Cantelo’s Chicken Establishment in Leicester Square. A complicated web of machination is being spun—we have it on the authority of a noble peer—against the integrity of the Austrian Empire, at a small coffee-shop in Soho. Prussia is being menaced by twenty-four determined Poles and Honveds in the attics of a cheap *restaurateur* in the Haymarket. Lots are being cast for the assassination of Louis Napoleon, in the inner parlours of various cigar shops. . . .”

There were, however, checks to such unaccustomed liberties, the chief and most immediate being lack of resources and the need to find gainful employment. When Marx and Engels found that in London they could not afford to publish the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, the newspaper which had been the cause of their expulsion from Cologne in 1849, Engels went to Manchester to work for twenty years in the family cotton firm to keep himself—and the Marx family in London—more or less solvent.

Very few of the exiles were wealthy. Count Oskar von Reichenbach helped his fellows by taking them on as tutors to

his children, and Baroness Marie von Bruiningk also hired German tutors. She kept open house for that group among the exiles (led by the ex-army captain and revolutionary, August Willich) which disdained to look for gainful employment, preferring to plot the military overthrow of Prussia in the Baroness’s drawing-room or the lounge of Schärttner’s German pub in Long Acre, in the mistaken belief that a “new revolution” could be sparked off in a matter of months. But most of the refugees were more or less destitute when they arrived, and tended, naturally, to approach one another for help.

Thus, as so often happens, certain areas became a focus for refugee groups. Soho—particularly Leicester Square, with its cheap housing and its “new model lodging-houses”, set up to offer bare but hygienic accommodation to the very poor—was one such area. Marx lived in an overcrowded house in Dean Street, and several of his friends—“my Party”, as he half-mockingly called them—spent at least their first few months in England in one of these lodging-houses. St John’s Wood (not then so smart as it is today, though airier and less crowded than noxious Soho) was home for some of the slightly better-off exiles. The richer London Germans, bankers and merchants like the Barings, the Goldsmids, and the Rothschilds, who had been established in London for a generation or more, had their favoured parts of London: Hackney and Camberwell were especially popular, for fresh air and large, comfortable houses. Many a political exile travelled to Camberwell to earn a few pounds from lecturing to his non-political fellow-countrymen.

A second, more subtle, check to the exiles’ activities was the prejudice—religious, class, sexual, as well as political—which existed even in England, the freest (or, as Engels put it, “the least unfree”) country in the world. Jobs were hard to find because of native competition and suspicion. The teachers among the refugees, most of them “free thinkers”, came up against religious prejudice; and the governesses and private tutors were treated as social inferiors by their employers. “Philistine” England had a surfeit of refugee artists and musicians, and working-class exiles were seen, not unnaturally, as a threat to the jobs of their toiling, near-starving English counterparts.

A third difficulty, faced by the German refugees in particular, was largely self-created—the bitter, energy-wasting squabbling between rival political factions. They had all suffered under repressive German governments, and many had been jailed for anti-state activities. One of