

same; they do not need us because our agendas are the same—they are not the same; they do not need us because our experience has been the same—it has not been the same. In the end they need us, and we them, because our dream, at its richest, has been the same—the dream of survival with dignity, the dream of the ultimate defeat of the dehumanizing and dehumanized oppressor, even when he is Jewish, even when he is Black. Otherwise our dreams and we ourselves become raisins in the sun. . . .

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## **EXCURSUS III**

### **The Dispensability of Mr. Kissinger**

Last April in these pages Wilson Carey McWilliams wrote that continued association with Mr. Nixon's regime posed some "moral problems" for Henry Kissinger. "Can Kissinger afford to lend himself to a regime which, in every significant way, endangers the general good?" Mr. McWilliams asked. Presidents come and go, Mr. Kissinger stays on. Mr. Ford's first public statement upon assuming office was that he would retain Henry Kissinger. The people may be assured that the country's future will rest in the good hands to which Richard Nixon had consigned it.

The assumption in April was that Mr. Kissinger, being a cut above the Nixon gang, must have suffered some qualms of conscience about his complicity in their designs. There is little to suggest, however, that Mr. Kissinger did not feel quite at home with the Nixon substance and style. A new and more critical perspective on Mr. Kissinger began to surface following his petulant performance at Salzburg in June, when he threatened to resign unless cleared of charges that he had wiretapped newspeople and sundry friends. To be sure, more than half the U.S. Senate immediately issued sycophantic assurances of their unshakable confidence in the Secretary of State. Others, fortunately, were not so ready to make their act of submission to the doctrine of the indispensability of Dr. Kissinger.

The Salzburg exhibition may be explained in part by Kissinger's emotional exhaustion, but in succeeding weeks Mr. Kissinger let it be known that he was perfectly serious and retracted no-

thing of what he had said at Salzburg. He has shown not a scintilla of sensitivity to what even some of his admirers found deeply troubling in his Salzburg ultimatum. He seemed to be suggesting that he was above the give-and-take of democratic criticism and accountability. It was unthinkable that rules made for lesser breeds should be applied to him. This was also a pervasive feeling in the Nixon Administration.

Regrettably Salzburg was not an isolated incident. It turned out to be the slap in the face needed to provoke a more careful examination of Mr. Kissinger's much vaunted style, and especially of his posture toward the democratic process. Increasingly that posture appears to be one of disdain. Critics note that the great "Kissinger moments" of alleged diplomatic brilliance are usually worked out with various dictatorships—notably Russia, China, and the several despots of the Arab world. Kissinger's success with democratic leaderships not given to autocracy and secrecy is somewhat less remarkable.

In the last two months there has also been a growing public puzzlement about the meaning of the various *détentes*. Is the oft-mentioned "structure for peace" more than rhetoric? Is it perhaps but a prop in the showmanship of the master of the quick fix? Troubling doubts arise about what the U.S. is really receiving in return for concessions to the Soviet Union, for example. Success in negotiations is no surprise if one party is prepared to do all the giving. On the question of freer emigration from the Soviet Union Mr. Kissinger had to be forced by the Congress to make himself a wee bit unpleasant. So eager was he to avoid jeopardizing the scenarios of seeming success. Subsequent Soviet concessions on this point unavoidably raise questions about other possible concessions that might have been missed.

More recently are the revelations about Mr. Kissinger's role in the CIA's undermining of the Allende government in Chile. In a course of gross hypocrisy he lectures the Congress on the sacred doctrine of noninterference in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union and South Korea while all the while directing the downfall of a government that was, whatever its faults, democratically elected. As though to compound the crime Mr. Kissinger, it is reliably reported, has resisted the Congress's clear mandate to press the present rulers of Chile on the issues of human rights, especially in connection with their torture and execution of thousands of political prisoners. He has, according to these reports, gone so far as to reprimand the U.S. ambassador to Chile who had the audacity to bring up the question of political prisoners in meetings with the Chilean

junta. Apparently Mr. Kissinger believes ambassadors should stick to America's proper business of negotiating arms deals with police states. A pattern emerges from which the uninformed might infer that Mr. Kissinger shares a special affinity with murderers.

Then there was the rather grotesque confrontation with Senator Thomas Eagleton. The law, said the Senator, required that the U.S. cut off aid to Turkey after Turkey's aggressive actions on Cyprus. Mr. Kissinger opined there were strong diplomatic reasons for not offending the Turks. When the Senator noted that he was not there to discuss the pros and cons of the issue but simply to demand that Mr. Kissinger obey the law, the Secretary of State suggested that laws should not be permitted to get in the way of his grand designs for peace. As of this writing a still subservient Congressional leadership has agreed to see what they can do to make the law less inconvenient for Mr. Kissinger. One remembers being assured that the one good thing to come out of the Watergate trauma would be a new respect for the rule of law.

The lust for the secret and shady obviously feeds Mr. Kissinger's delight in the pride of power. The larger question is whether a democracy, with its habits of popular accountability, can also be an imperial power. Mr. Kissinger's behavior and his choice of heroes in the history of diplomacy suggest that he values the exercise of empire more than the ethos of democracy. While the current head of the CIA recently testified that America's interests hardly depend upon our ability to hire assassins and bribe native agitators, Mr. Kissinger seems to persist in viewing covert operations not only as a necessary evil but as a positive virtue.

Mr. Kissinger consistently depicts himself as the hard-nosed, un sentimental, realistic operator who knows how the game is played in the real world. It is precisely the mindset of the Rostows, Bundys, and McNamaras who with such exquisite expertise dragged America into Vietnam. In 1959 Kissinger wrote that the intellectual in power had to avoid on the one hand becoming "a promoter of technical remedies" and on the other "confusing dogmatism with morality and of courting martyrdom." There is little danger of Mr. Kissinger's succumbing to the second temptation.

I recall a lengthy conversation early in 1969 when Mr. Kissinger gave a demeaning little lecture to the late Rabbi Abraham Heschel on Kissinger's scant and undigested reading of the ethics of Reinhold Niebuhr. Then and since Kissinger equates moral considerations with simplistic moralism and dismisses questions of law as petty legalism. Somewhere along the way he

misread enough of Niebuhr to conclude that morality has to do with an ideal world that must remain hermetically sealed from the realist's field of action. Journalists of slight intellectual achievement deduce from his Harvard connection and the Middle European accent that Mr. Kissinger is something of a philosopher. The consistent theme in his words and deeds, however, is the determined exclusion of the larger questions and first principles which give philosophy breath. Mr. Kissinger gives every sign of being captive to the cramped and fetid world of the pragmatism of power.

No one should begrudge Mr. Kissinger his achievements in office, especially the opening to China. Some now say even that was "inevitable." If so, the inevitable seemed to require Henry Kissinger. But neither should anyone, least of all Mr. Kissinger, suppose that a public official in America has a right to adulation. Henry Kissinger is not indispensable. The democratic process is. If anyone finds this condition of public employment unacceptable, presumably he or she can look for another employer.

RJN

## EXCURSUS IV

### From the War Zone

After spending some time in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) I was convinced that the situation has changed greatly since my last visit a few years ago. The whites are in great fear for their future, while the blacks appear more confident than ever before about their future. You hear people saying: "It is just a matter of time. We will get our country soon." You also hear people talking about freedom fighters much more openly. They make it a point to listen to Radio Zambia every evening because they are able to hear news that is relevant to them. (Listening to Radio Zambia is illegal in Rhodesia. If you are caught you will go to jail.) I was particularly amazed by the degree of political awareness of the ordinary person in the street both in the countryside and the urban areas, who a few years ago did not even know that he was oppressed. The whites' fear was evident in the results of the elections in which they overwhelmingly voted for the Rhodesia Front, whose election slogan was "To Safeguard Your Future, Vote Rhodesia Front."

They all know that a settlement of some kind has to be reached with the blacks, but they hope