

function, which was described by Boris Kršev in the period of five millennia (with a focus on those events that left a mark on the era) and which is based on numerous and relevant scientific sources, will undoubtedly help students as well as all interested readers to understand the contemporary state of global security jeopardized by international terrorism, organized crime, etc.

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doi: 10.19090/i.2018.29.197-198

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ISTRAŽIVANJA – JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCHES 29, 197-198

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Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger: 1923-1968. The Idealist*, New York: Penguin Press, 2015, 987 pages.

(Nil Ferguson, *Kisindžer 1923-1968: Idealista*, knjiga 1, Beograd: CIRSD, 2016, 987. str.)

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The complexity of researching the history of international relations in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is most visible through the example of a biographical overview of one of the most important individuals of that time – Henry Kissinger. Scottish historian Niall Ferguson spent a significant amount of time during 2011 interviewing the doyen of world diplomacy. Walking in Kissinger's footsteps throughout Harvard, his intention was to present, as best and most accurately as he could, the unorthodox life and the role of this diplomat in the American and world politics.

Even though he was not, at first, that much interested in writing Kissinger's biography, he accepted this job and as the main reason for doing so he stated Kissinger's exceptional graduation thesis "The Meaning of History" 388 pages long. In this thesis, Henry Kissinger focused most of his attention on the analysis of three philosophers – Spengler, Toynbee and Kant, who, according to the author, had the most profound effect to the development of Kissinger's political thought.

Today many historians and political scientists describe him as an opportunist, pragmatically applying unethical Machiavellianism, especially when compared to Nixon's and Trump's foreign

policy and relations with the USSR (present-day Russia) and China. During the past 50 years, these two superpowers have interchanged their roles when it comes to their main enemy – the USA. Ferguson does not agree with his critics but believes that it was his mentor professor William Elliott who directed him towards Kant's philosophy. According to him, Kant's work *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* from 1785 had a special influence on him.

The book *Kissinger: 1923-1968. The Idealist* depicts the journey of the American diplomat from Fürth to Hanoi, which he somewhat often underlies with a Latin saying *per aspera ad astra*. It seems that the author wishes to assign (unnecessary) importance to his (already complex) biography, but on the other hand to also justify, through distant past, his "diplomatic chess games" which this philosopher played with his "red" opponents.

Growing up in a small Bavarian town, known only for the significant export of goods *per capita* and the construction of the first German railway on the relation Fürth – Nuremberg in 1835, left a deep trace in the evolution of his personality – from a very radical Jew in the beginning, who became deeply transformed by his escape to the USA and his war experience, in a Nietzschean sense – what did not kill him made him stronger. In times when Nazism flourished, Fürth became a place where power was being demonstrated, a small town in which the old German ideal *Ruhe und Ordnung* lost its meaning and the reflection of the events in Berlin became an inevitable quotidian. Before the elections in 1933 Fürth was known as *Rote Stadt* and *Verjudet*, but shortly after it became a *Judenfrei* town.

The Kissinger family has left Bavaria on 20 August 1938, catching the "last train" and chance for emigration. Ten days later they took a boat from Southampton to New York. It seemed at first that whilst fleeing from one crisis they landed into another. The American society was not overly receptive of new immigrants at the end of the 1930s. Since then a lot of time had passed until Afro-Americans were granted their true rights. Neither were Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, American Indians, Hindus in a better position.

Apart from the existing segregation and the new economic depression, the biggest obstacle for the Kissinger family was the linguistic barrier. In these moments the author described the rocky road that Heinz had to pass to become Henry, while World War II and mobilization were, paradoxically, the main catalysts of Heinz's Americanisation.

Having in mind his past and an excellent Bavarian accent, Henry Kissinger found his place as a counterintelligence officer of the US Army corps. He had the chance to witness *in situ* the meaning of the word *holocaust*, of which he was aware ever since August 1938. The Alamo camp left a lasting mark on Henry Kissinger's personality, especially the events which occurred after the encounter with the Soviet army on Elba, the visit to his hometown Fürth and the conversation with his grandfather, an immigrant in Sweden. The young man who, before and during the war, saw the world in black and white, mentioned in his letter in 1948 that during the battles he encountered "many nuances" from black to white, so he perceived the war as his personal victory, not over Nazism itself but over his Orthodox Judaism.

During his education he was supported by the state as were the remaining 2 million American soldiers who were awarded a full scholarship by The Service Readjustment Act of 1944. Ferguson describes Kissinger as a clumsy, asocial bookworm without any sense of humour, sitting in a big chair in the hall next to the fireplace, reading books and biting his nails until they bled. As it was mentioned, he received his philosophical formation during the years he spent at Harvard under the mentorship of William Elliott. He distinguishes, as the most significant moment of his education, the "Beginning" – the final diploma-awarding ceremony for the graduate students. On that day, 22 June 1950, Dean Acheson and John von Neumann held speeches. Two different views from two speakers on the future of Europe and Asia had a profound resonance with Kissinger, especially having in mind Neumann's speech, who warned that "the same model of democracy cannot be applied to both Europe and Asia." Three days later, North

Korean troops crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

From this moment onwards the so-called "fear generations," who did not believe in the existence of the "lasting peace" until 1989, started to mature. From today's perspective the behaviour and contemplation of a naturalized American of Jewish descent, an immigrant from Nazi Germany, is completely understandable. Just from this description we can realize the complexity and burden he carried and is still carrying to this day. Ferguson sees, as an important turning point in his political career, the publishing of his book "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy." From the moment that book was published, Kissinger gained public attention, especially from the tight political circles, which either liked him or disdained him. There was almost no one who was indifferent or uninterested.

Chalmers Roberts from the Washington Post proclaimed his work as The Most Important Book of 1957. He mainly criticizes Kissinger's politics as either too harsh or describes it as insufficiently intelligent, except the moment Kissinger published this book. It is evident that the book left a positive impression on Ferguson since he tried to show, in his descriptions, the influence it exerted on the American politics of today as well, so he often made comparisons with Thucydides and even with Sun Tzu. At certain times, it seems that he saw the book as the pinnacle of Kissinger's thoughts, concretely in the part where Kissinger speaks about the "limited nuclear war." From a time distance, he justifies and explains that view by stating examples of localized wars like Korea and Vietnam as "limited wars, but without the use of nuclear weapons."

One of the results of the book's popularity was the friendship that emerged between Kissinger and Nelson Rockefeller, who was raptured with this piece of work. Kissinger earned his first managerial role in the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, managing The Special Studies Project and therefore living between Boston and Washington. In the upcoming campaign he became a regularly cited intellectual, and after Kennedy came to power, a man whose opinion was always welcomed in the Oval Office. Apart

from the Vietnam situation, Kennedy's administration was marked by the Berlin and Cuban crises as well, which revealed two, hitherto unfamiliar Kissinger's shortcomings. The first one was that he knew about Germany better than the USA, while the other was that he could not estimate all of Moscow's moves at that moment. But if we look back at Vietnam and the policy of fear from the domino effect maintained by presidents Kennedy and Johnson, we could say that those were the most criticized Kissinger's moves, but those which brought him to Hanoi and the well-known *Vietnam negotiations*.

Kissinger went through his biggest personal transformation during the 1960s, having in mind turbulent events on his personal and professional plan. His divorce in 1964, Oedipal experiences, Rockefeller's unsuccessful nomination as the Republican candidate etc., paradoxically empowered and rationalized Kissinger. Because of his actions during the 1968 campaign, he became disliked and earned an epithet of an opportunistic politician. The position of the advisor of the United States National Security Council gave him ample opportunities to develop his own career, as well as control over many events and people. The National Security Council was, at that moment, the most important political institution of the USA. In the book Ferguson expected from the 40-year-old Kissinger to be Bismarck at the Congress of Berlin, while to the ordinary reader it seemed that at that moment Kissinger himself did not know where he was. He just tried to seize the opportunity that emerged as much as he could. From 1965 onward and the first visit to Vietnam, he realized that the USA could come out of this unsuccessful war only by the means of diplomacy. The article *Vietnam Negotiations* proved to possibly be the move of his career, even though he tried everything at first to prevent its publishing. This is the period of Kissinger's life when he showed his idealism less and less in favour of real pragmatism. Maybe this was the reason why the author Niall Ferguson chose the year 1968 as the ideal division of his life and career.

The biography he compiled is without a doubt a brilliant synthesis of a diplomat and the time he

lived in. Actors of today's international relations and historians investigating this subject have in front of them an exquisite piece of work which does not represent a panegyric made out of praises, but a critical review of Kissinger's scientific work and political actions at the beginning of the strained Cold War situation and immediately before the pinnacle of his political career.

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doi: 10.19090/i.2018.29.198-200

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ISTRAŽIVANJA – JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL

RESEARCHES 29, 198-200