

# Kissinger 1923-1968: The Idealist



Henry Kissinger is one of the most controversial figures in American history. He served as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, and he played a key role in shaping U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. Kissinger has been both praised and criticized for his diplomatic skills, his realism, and his willingness to use covert action.

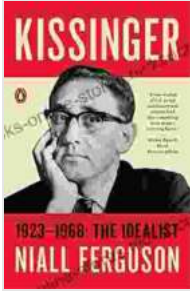
**Kissinger: 1923-1968: The Idealist** by Niall Ferguson

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 30660 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting: Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 1004 pages



In his book Kissinger 1923-1968: The Idealist, Niall Ferguson argues that Kissinger was an idealist who believed that the United States had a moral responsibility to promote democracy and human rights around the world. Ferguson draws on Kissinger's early writings and speeches to show that he was deeply influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment and the American Revolution.

Ferguson argues that Kissinger's idealism was tempered by his realism. Kissinger understood that the world was a dangerous place and that the United States could not always achieve its ideals. However, he believed that the United States should always strive to do what was right, even if it meant making difficult choices.

Ferguson's book provides a fresh perspective on Kissinger's life and work. He shows that Kissinger was not simply a cold-blooded realist, but a man who was deeply committed to his ideals. Kissinger's idealism was often tested, but it never completely disappeared.

## **Kissinger's Early Life and Education**

Henry Kissinger was born in Fürth, Germany, on May 27, 1923. His parents were orthodox Jews who emigrated to the United States in 1938, fleeing

the Nazi regime. Kissinger grew up in New York City, where he attended George Washington High School. He then went on to study at City College of New York and Harvard University.

At Harvard, Kissinger studied political science and history. He was influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the American Revolution. He also developed a deep admiration for the United States, which he saw as a beacon of hope for the world.

After graduating from Harvard, Kissinger worked as a consultant for the Council on Foreign Relations. He also taught at Harvard and MIT. In 1968, he published his book *“Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy”*, which became a major influence on U.S. foreign policy.

### **Kissinger's Role in the Nixon Administration**

In 1968, Richard Nixon was elected president of the United States. Nixon appointed Kissinger as his National Security Advisor. Kissinger played a key role in shaping Nixon's foreign policy. He helped to negotiate the end of the Vietnam War and the opening of relations with China. He also helped to develop the policy of *détente* with the Soviet Union.

Kissinger's role in the Nixon administration was controversial. He was criticized for his support of the Vietnam War and his willingness to use covert action. However, he was also praised for his diplomatic skills and his ability to negotiate with foreign leaders.

### **Kissinger's Legacy**

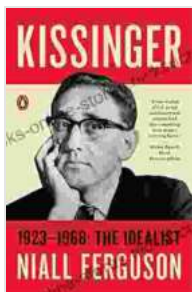
Henry Kissinger is a complex and controversial figure. He has been both praised and criticized for his role in American foreign policy. However, there

is no doubt that he is one of the most important figures in American history.

Kissinger's legacy is still being debated. Some argue that he was a brilliant diplomat who helped to make the world a safer place. Others argue that he was a war criminal who should be held accountable for his actions.

Regardless of one's opinion of Kissinger, it is important to understand his life and work. His story is a reminder that the world is a complex place and that there are no easy answers to the challenges we face.

Niall Ferguson's book *\_Kissinger 1923-1968: The Idealist\_* provides a fresh perspective on Kissinger's life and work. Ferguson argues that Kissinger was an idealist who believed that the United States had a moral responsibility to promote democracy and human rights around the world. Ferguson's book is a valuable contribution to the historiography of Kissinger and the Cold War.



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