

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek oponenta)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): **Lucie Novotná**

Název práce: **Role evangelikálních křesťanů při utváření zahraniční politiky Spojených států amerických během období administrativy Donalda Trumpa**

Oponoval (u externích oponentů uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

doc. PhDr. Francis Raška, PhD.

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):

This BA dissertation aims to discuss the role of evangelical Christians in the formulation of US foreign policy during the presidency of Donald Trump.

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):

The topic is challenging. The methodology is specified at the beginning of the work, the argumentation is solid, and there is evidence that the student has worked with a plethora of sources.

3. FORMÁLNÍ A JAZYKOVÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (jazykový projev, správnost citace a odkazů na literaturu, grafická úprava, formální náležitosti práce apod.):

I have no problem with most formal aspects, but there are some typographical and capitalization errors that could have been discovered by the student if she had thoroughly proofread her text.

4. KONTROLA ORIGINALITY TEXTU

Prohlašuji, že jsem se seznámil/a s výsledkem kontroly originality textu závěrečné práce v systému:

[] Theses [] Turnitin [] Ouriginal (Urkund)

Komentář k výsledku kontroly:

There are no issues with originality.

5. STRUČNÝ KOMENTÁŘ HODNOTITELE (celkový dojem z bakalářské práce, silné a slabé stránky, originalita myšlenek, naplnění cíle apod.):

Lucie Novotná has written her BA dissertation on the role of evangelical Christians in the Trump Administration's formulation of its policy towards Israel. The topic is complex and relevant as it sheds light on the role of religious groups' influence on policy, which is somewhat disturbing when one takes into consideration the constitutional separation of church and state. The work consists of an Introduction, three chapters, and a Conclusion. I will offer my comments on each section in the ensuing paragraphs.

In the Introduction, Lucie states the aim of the work, which is to examine the role of evangelical Christians in the formulation of the Trump Administration's foreign policy vis-à-vis Israel. Lucie begins with an analysis of the geopolitical significance of Israel for the United States. Subsequently, she discusses the evangelical Christian community and the fact that Donald Trump does not fulfill the moral criteria to be considered an evangelical Christian. In spite of this fact, the evangelical Christians played a key role in the 2016 campaign and Trump rewarded them by granting them influence over the

formulation of American foreign policy in the Middle East. Lucie then proceeds to furnish a description of the content of the individual chapters. She also states the two criteria utilized in her research: 1) The role of the Evangelical Executive Advisory Board; 2) Trump Administration policy towards Israel. The final part of the Introduction is a review of the relevant literature. I think that the Introduction serves its purpose and definitely encourages the reader to continue reading.

Chapter 1 provides a glimpse into who the evangelical Christians are, what motivates them theologically, the nature of evangelical Christian organizations, and their role in the so-called Israel Lobby. Lucie begins with the four characteristics common to evangelical Christians, namely 1) a conversion after meeting God; 2) an active approach on the part of the individual to spread the gospel through deeds; 3) accepting the Bible and referring to it as the only source of Christian faith; 4) accentuating the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is mentioned that the United States is a specific entity where this type of religion has gained a firm footing. Then, Lucie delves into the history of evangelical Christian support for Israel, which predates the 1948 foundation of the State of Israel. This evangelical Christian faith has crossed over into politics with most evangelical Christians favoring American military action in the Middle East to protect Israel, which, as an entity, supposedly is the fulfillment of a biblical commitment. The evangelical Christian organizations and their role in supporting Israel is likewise explained. I must say that I admire the student's patience when analyzing the far-fetched theocratic arguments of evangelical Christians. The chapter is of excellent quality.

The role played by evangelical Christians in the 2016 Trump presidential campaign forms the subject of Chapter 2. Lucie begins by pointing out that Trump went from claiming that he wished to be a neutral observer in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to declaring himself to be so pro-Israel that he favored moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which was realized during Trump's presidency. Trump's road to the Republican nomination is also depicted as is his choice of evangelical Christian Mike Pence to be his running mate. I find very interesting how evangelical Christians mostly united behind Trump even when his misogynistic behavior surfaced in the media. In fact, the evangelical Christians in opinion polls reversed themselves on the suitability of immoral candidates for office after Trump's distasteful remarks. My overall impression of this chapter is positive.

In Chapter 3, Lucie discusses the actual influence of evangelical Christians in the White House. The White House Evangelical Advisory Board, which was the successor to the Evangelical Executive Advisory Board, wasted no time exercising its influence. Members of this organization held meetings with Trump, Pence, and numerous White House officials with the aim of promoting their agenda. The first thing Trump did was to issue an executive order softening the provisions of the so-called Johnson Amendment of 1954, whose aim had been to prevent partisan politicking and candidate endorsement by tax-exempt religious organizations. Trump's argument was that this violated the First Amendment of the US Constitution. Supporters of the Johnson Amendment have countered that it safeguarded the separation of church and state. Several events transpired during the Trump Administration's tenure. First, the US embassy was moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem with the United States recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Second, Trump's "Peace to Prosperity" diplomacy was heavily biased in favor of Israel and basically led nowhere. However, the bilateral Abraham Accords

established relations between Israel, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Sudan, and Morocco. Both of these events largely had the support of evangelical Christians. This chapter is fine.

In the Conclusion, Lucie recapitulates her main points and states that it is nearly impossible to measure the extent to which evangelical Christians influenced US policy towards Israel during the Trump Administration. However, the access of evangelical Christians to the White House and White House advisors was unprecedented. Lucie has made her point.

This work fulfills the requirements for a successful BA dissertation. However, I have two criticisms. First, there are some careless typographical errors. Second, I think that Lucie might have reached a more decisive conclusion if she had, for example, covered the other influences on the Trump Administration's foreign policy and whether other actors disagreed with evangelical Christian positions. I, therefore, recommend a classification of B or C contingent upon the quality of the oral defense.

**6. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):
Who were the other foreign policy actors in Trump's White House? What was their influence? Please explain.**

You mention Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. What was his role in Trump's Middle East policy?

**7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA
(A-F): B or C depending on the quality of the oral defense**

Datum: **26 August 2024**

Podpis:

Pozn.: Hodnocení píše k jednotlivým bodům, pokud nepíšete v textovém editoru, použijte při nedostatku místa zadní stranu nebo příložený list. V hodnocení práce se pokuste oddělit ty její nedostatky, které jsou, podle vašeho mínění, obhajobou neodstranitelné (např. chybí kritické zhodnocení pramenů a literatury), od těch věcí, které student může dobrou obhajobou napravit; poměr těchto dvou položek berte prosím v úvahu při stanovení konečné známky.