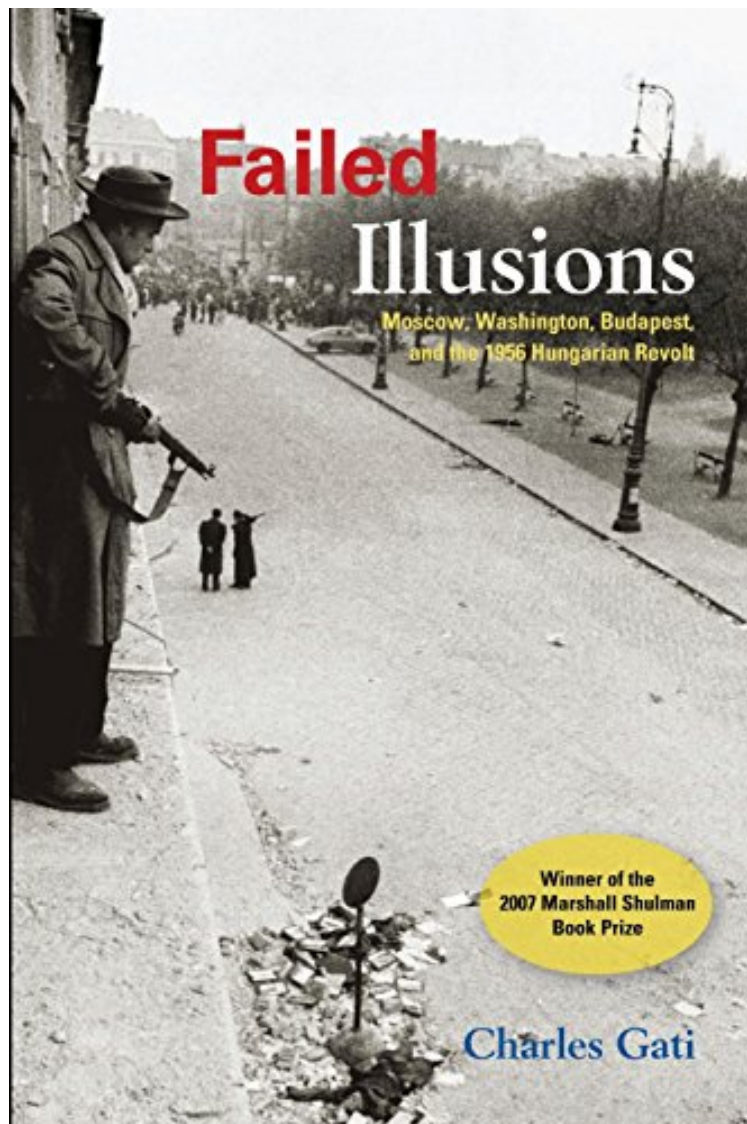


(Free) Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt (Cold War International History Project)

Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt (Cold War International History Project)

Charles Gati

ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#611770 in Books Stanford University Press 2008-02-06 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .70 x 6.00l, 1.01 #File Name: 0804759642280 pages | File size: 40.Mb

Charles Gati : Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt (Cold War International History Project) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt (Cold War International History Project):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The Fate of All Illusions By R. L. Huff- so Hungary's fate in '56 should come as no real surprise. Gati has done a good job in reassessing the course of a pivotal cold war event, and fleshed out the narrative through incorporating new documentation and memoirs. In this regard, however, there is really little that is new to add over an uprising scholars have steadily picked to the bone for half a century. Gati's real contribution here is his Rashomon-like critique of the revolution and of its five main protagonists: Americans, Soviets, Hungarian Communists, insurgents - and Imre Nagy, caught between the latter three. The US illusion was its belief that, since it could not start World War Three over a Soviet satellite, inciting rhetoric was its only sufficient recourse rather than pragmatic realpolitik. The Soviet illusion, and that of its Hungarian allies, lay in Moscow's belief that the uncorked, anti-Stalinist genie could be stuffed back in the vodka bottle. Nagy's illusion - and that of the reformist intellectuals around him - was that he and Moscow spoke a common political language that could open serious dialogue. And the insurgents' illusion lay in their faith that, not only could they overturn the "Communist regime," but that Moscow would morally capitulate as the Free World rushed to aid Hungary's struggle. Gati takes apart all these, but then concludes that the revolution's failure was not inevitable after all. One must ask why not, after he has spent so much time marshaling evidence of this rampant political blindness. As an American reader, the most interesting part to me was his analysis of American actions and motives. The tantalizing remark of Richard Nixon's, that it would be very convenient for the '56 presidential race if the Soviets pulled some brutality in Eastern Europe, coupled with RFE's inflammatory broadcasts soon after, suggest a cynical collusion that - given what we know about CIA black operations of the period - isn't as farfetched as some might wish to believe. The US, for its part, behaved as it did because - like the USSR - it was led by unimaginative men stuffed just as full of illusions of their own. (Witness their equally confused, floundering handling of the Cuban Revolution a mere two years later.) The final illusion to fail, if one reads Gati correctly, is his: namely, his young man's belief that a democratic socialism with a human face could ever have arisen out of the Stalinist muck in which it was planted. Of course, this did eventually arise after 1985 - too late to save the system after three decades more of accumulating rot. Perhaps the chief criticism to be made of Gati's account is his expectation that those caught up in the passions of '56 could display the maturity and insight he's gained fifty years after the event. That is surely the chief failed illusion of all armchair historical analysis.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Excellent analysis of the Hungarian-Soviet-Western interaction By John F. Ryan Gati's book is written with the perspective of the forces at work in Budapest, Moscow and Washington before and during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. He briefly recounts his own experience as a young Hungarian journalist during the 12 days of the Revolution, and then proceeds to profile in detail the events and personalities of that time. He manages to capture the spontaneity of the event, and how leaders in the three capitals misinterpreted and finally acted (or failed to act), often with limited understanding. The book is well-researched (almost every page has footnotes), and despite criticism by an earlier commenter, is quite in line with more recent interpretations of the 1956 events, using recently released Soviet, American and Hungarian archives, which were not available to earlier authors. As it has been mentioned by another reviewer, it is a human story, not an encyclopedic one, and I found it engrossing.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good Book; the Book taught me a different way ... By J. Iorenzo Good Book ; the Book taught me a different way to see the Hungarian Revolution, it talks about the mistakes committed by all the participants in this drama getting the final result that the Revolution could have achieved more if the aspirations and demands would have been less. Also the author tells about the political actors some of whom were not very clever or became leaders of the revolution by surprise. the author gives You the qualities and flaws of Imre Nagy. I liked a lot what the autor says about the role of Radio Free Europe in the conflict and I never had thought about the consequences of their broadcasts.

Winner of the 2007 Marshall Shulman Prize The 1956 Hungarian revolution, and its suppression by the U.S.S.R., was a key event in the cold war, demonstrating deep dissatisfaction with both the communist system and old-fashioned Soviet imperialism. But now, fifty years later, the simplicity of this David and Goliath story should be revisited, according to Charles Gati's new history of the revolt. Denying neither Hungarian heroism nor Soviet brutality, *Failed Illusions* nevertheless modifies our picture of what happened. Imre Nagy, a reform communist who headed the revolutionary government and turned into a genuine patriot, could not rise to the occasion by steering a realistic course between his people's demands and Soviet geopolitical and ideological interests. The United States was all talk, no action, while Radio Free Europe simultaneously backed the insurgents' unrealizable demands and opposed Nagy. In the end, the Soviet Union followed its imperial impulse instead of seeking a political solution to the crisis in the spirit of de-Stalinization. *Failed Illusions* is based on extensive archival research, including the CIA's operational files, and hundreds of interviews with participants in Budapest, Moscow, and Washington. Personal observations by the author, a young reporter in Budapest in 1956, bring the tragic story vividly to life.

"Reading *Failed Illusions* is like reading a John le Carre novel with documentation. Charles Gati provides a suspenseful inside look into the types of issues and characters le Carre has portrayed in his novels yet Gati's story is all too real and tragic." (Stephen F. Szabo Johns Hopkins University) "The main message on U.S. foreign policy in Gati's

book resonates with me. We're forever spouting bullshit in foreign policy for domestic political reasons at great costs to people abroad, who take the bullshit seriously." (Leslie Gelb President Emeritus, Council on Foreign Relations and former foreign-affairs columnist, New York Times)"Charles Gati's Failed Illusions is a searching, scholarly account of the political calculations of the Kremlin, the White House, and the Hungarian Communist leadership." (New York Times Book)"The product of more than 15 years of extraordinary research and interviewing, much of it in Hungarian, his book highlights just how much we have to learn about key Cold War events and, more important, how we should go about learning it." (Foreign Affairs)"The '56-anniversary book that's gotten the most press is Charles Gati's Failed Illusions, which, in meticulous scholarly detail, fortifies the new, more depressing argument for why America didn't ride to the rescue with either military might or aggressive diplomacy." (BOOKFORUM)"Gati's book towers high above the rest as by far the best book published on 1956... his work aims to examine what happened and to point to what could have happened given the other complex factors that were in play in 1956. The fruit of Gati's effort is an engaging, fascinating, and well-written narrative coupled with masterful historical and political analysis." (Slavic)"Charles Gati's Failed Illusions is an outstanding work." (London of Books)"Charles Gati's Failed Illusions gives a comprehensive account of the Revolution in succinct and elegant prose along with his own analysis and some speculation." (New York of Books)"Failed Illusions sheds new light on American policy, especially the controversial role of Radio Free Europe as it encouraged the rebels...[and] Mr. Gati's excellent footnotes, several quite personal and poignant, give added depth to the story." (The Economist)"Failed Illusions casts incisively a new perspective on three key dimensions of the historic drama that was the Hungarian Revolution: the unsavory background and the heroic epiphany of Imre Nagy, the revolution's tragic leader; the confused, disruptive, and ultimately devious Soviet efforts to manipulate the Hungarian communists; and the impotent futility of US posturing which masqueraded as 'the policy of liberation.' Riveting as a story, significant as a history." (Zbigniew Brzezinski former U.S. National Security Advisor, author of The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict)"The main message on U.S. foreign policy in Gati's book resonates with me. We're forever spouting bullshit in foreign policy for domestic political reasons at great costs to people abroad, who take the bullshit seriously." (Leslie Gelb President Emeritus, Council on Foreign Relations and former foreign-affairs columnist, New York Times)"Born and raised in Hungary, Gati...was a young journalist in Budapest at the time. Using hundreds of documents in the archives in Budapest, Moscow, and Washington, he has written a thorough and scholarly analysis of the revolution." (Library Journal)"Gati has undertaken an important, brilliant reappraisal of the 1956 Hungarian uprising and its subsequent violent suppression. Scholars of the Cold War, Hungarian history, and anyone interested in the popular revolution will be spellbound by this book." (CHOICE)"...Failed Illusions is a brilliant exercise in the counterfactual, a catalog of the "what ifs" that should be considered when thinking about the creation and perpetuation of the Soviet bloc." (The Moscow Times)"Gati draws on reams of new research and documentary evidence from Hungary, while ferreting out scores of fascinating documents from the U.S. archives. Specialists on this subject will benefit immensely from this work, but the book is written in such an engaging manner that it will also appeal to a more general audience." (Mark Kramer, Director of Cold War Studies Harvard University)From the Author"Two weeks after Moscow crushed the revolution, I left Hungary, going first to Austria and then in a few weeks to the United States. I became one of some 182,000 refugees from Soviet-dominated Hungary. My parents, though I was their only child, did not discourage me from leaving. They stayed up all night before I left, watching me as I wrote a few notes of farewell to relatives and friends and put a few belongings together for my escape from uncertainty to uncertainty. Emerging from the kitchen, my mother came around to stuff her freshly baked sweets--the best in the world--into my small backpack. "Look up Uncle Sanyi in New York," she said. At dawn, when it was time to say goodbye, my father tried to hold back his tears but he could not. "Write often," he said, his voice quavering with emotion. We embraced. We kissed. As I left, they stood on the small balcony of our Barcsay Street apartment and waved. I walked backwards as long as I could see them, hoping they could also see me for another few seconds. (As I recall this scene some fifty years later, holding back my tears as my father once tried to do, I still see them waving on the balcony, and I always will.) I did not fully appreciate until much later--when I had my own children in America--how unselfish my parents were to let go of me."From the Inside FlapThe 1956 Hungarian revolution, and its suppression by the U.S.S.R., was a key event in the cold war, demonstrating deep dissatisfaction with both the communist system and old-fashioned Soviet imperialism. But now, fifty years later, the simplicity of this David and Goliath story should be revisited, according to Charles Gati's new history of the revolt.Denying neither Hungarian heroism nor Soviet brutality, Failed Illusions nevertheless modifies our picture of what happened. Imre Nagy, a reform communist who headed the revolutionary government and turned into a genuine patriot, could not rise to the occasion by steering a realistic course between his people's demands and Soviet geopolitical and ideological interests. The United States was all talk, no action, while Radio Free Europe simultaneously backed the insurgents' unrealizable demands and opposed Nagy. In the end, the Soviet Union followed its imperial impulse instead of seeking a political solution to the crisis in the spirit of de-Stalinization.Failed Illusions is based on extensive archival research, including the CIA's operational files, and hundreds of interviews with participants in Budapest, Moscow, and Washington. Personal observations by the author, a young reporter in Budapest in 1956, bring the tragic story vividly

to life.