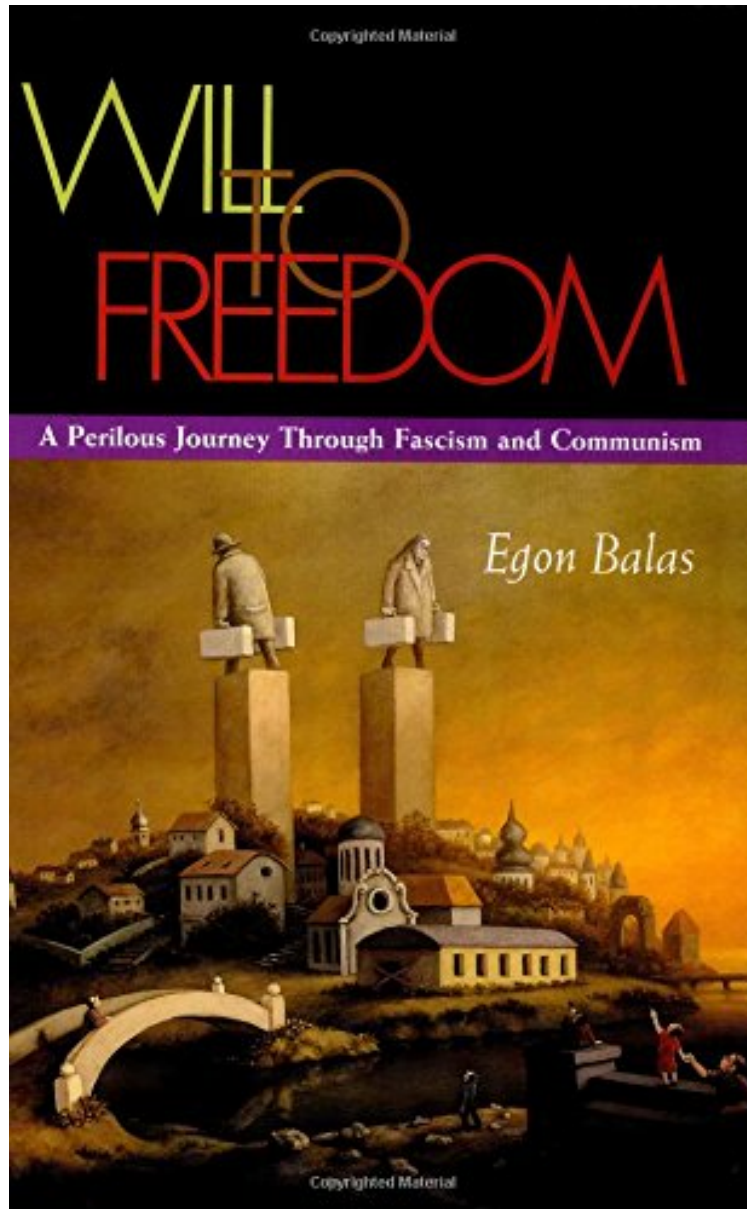


[Download pdf] Will to Freedom: A Perilous Journey Through Fascism and Communism

# Will to Freedom: A Perilous Journey Through Fascism and Communism

*Egon Balas*

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**Egon Balas : Will to Freedom: A Perilous Journey Through Fascism and Communism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Will to Freedom: A Perilous Journey Through Fascism and Communism:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Brilliance and bravery saved him  
By Angela M. Hey  
If ever I get imprisoned I'll remember to use a coffee-stained napkin and stale bread to make a chess set. I also learned from Egon Balas that to exercise in a confined space one takes an odd number of steps - else one walks in circles. Algorithmic ingenuity enabled him to successfully take up mathematics in his late 30s, against the conventional wisdom that good mathematicians do their work when young, and become an outstanding professor of industrial administration, applied mathematics and operations research at Carnegie Mellon University. He tells stories of his lives - escaping death narrowly - "according to my own taste", making it one of the most compelling biographies I have ever read. This would be an extraordinary thriller if it were fiction - but it's not, it's real. The highly personal account of how a Transylvanian Jew became a revolutionary worker, a dapper diplomat, a tortured prisoner and a creative academic takes one through some absolutely awful scenes. Balas' craftiness enabled him to survive and his toughness under severe torture protected his friends. This is not some second hand account of Communist and Nazi hate, Balas drags the reader through his pain and suffering. There are happier moments - such as when he comes out of prison and addresses his daughter - not realizing that he's speaking to a younger sibling born in his absence and that his daughter has grown considerably. For anyone who wants to understand willpower and survival in Hungary and Romania during the 2nd world war this is a must read. Besides historical interest, the story's suspense makes it an ideal gift for thriller and spy story readers.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Inspiring legend from a sagacious elder  
By S. Shen  
I am a PhD student doing Operations Research - more specifically, Mixed Integer Programming - that is why I purchased this book, just because of the curiosity about the autobiography of a brilliant mathematician in our field. I started this book in the end of Feb and couldn't help stopping digging into his unbelievable and inspiring life stories and have already started the third time. Everytime I get new gains and thoughts. First, it is definitely a good encouragement for my research work, by his enthusiasm and passion for knowledge and mathematics; in addition, I always can judge my attitude to life and people by learning from his experience and his eternal optimistic awareness. Here is a book, where you can find faith, justice, intelligence, honesty and love.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding human being, inspiring to follow his autobiography  
By CF  
This autobiography is mindblowing. Explained in a plain and captivating style, it brings us to how past generations have endured (and fought) terrible times. Egon Balas is an incredible person from which we should all learn.

Will to Freedom is an eyewitness account of the social and political upheaval that shook Eastern Europe from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s. As an underground resistance fighter, political prisoner, fugitive, and Communist Party official, Egon Balas charts his journey from idealistic young Communist to disenchanted dissident. Attracted by its anti-Nazi stance, Balas joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1942, after Hungary had entered the war on Hitler's side. He helped organize work stoppages and distributed antiwar leaflets. In his memoir, he offers a compelling account first of his eventual imprisonment and ordeal under torture and then of his escape and life in hiding.

"Deeply moving, rich with information and insight." - Elie Wiesel  
"From the Publisher" Deeply moving, rich with information and insight." - Elie Wiesel  
"Egon Balas recalls all that happened in vivid detail - their names, the places, the underground resisters, the enemy collaborators, the narrow escapes, the tortures, the betrayals, and forced confessions. The few who, by a quirk of fate, survived." - George B. Dantzig, Stanford University  
"A welcome reminder that a highly intelligent, stubbornly courageous, and lucky human spirit will sometimes prevail over baneful forces." - Herbert A. Simon, Carnegie Mellon University  
"[Balas] takes the reader from his Transylvanian school years and early Communist commitment through a fascist prison in Budapest to imprisonment in a Romanian Communist prison, all the way to a brilliant academic career in the United States. Few writers have discussed more dramatically what it meant to be a political idealist of Jewish background in the turmoils of Nazism and Stalinism in East Central Europe." - Istvan Deak, Seth Low Professor of History, Columbia University  
About the Author  
Egon Balas, a renowned mathematician, is professor of industrial administration and applied mathematics at Carnegie Mellon's Tepper School of Business.