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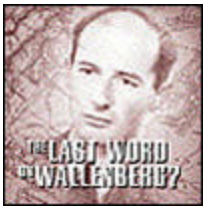
The American Jewish Committee
Advancing Religious, Ethnic and Racial Understanding Worldwide

The Last Word on Wallenberg? New Investigations, New Questions
by William Korey



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Foreword

On January 17, 1945, Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat stationed in Budapest but working for the U.S. War Refugee Board who had issued protective passports to tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews, was arrested by Soviet secret police and disappeared into the Gulag. More than half a century later, the questions about his fate have yet to be satisfactorily answered: Why was he arrested and detained? Of what value was he to the Soviets? Where was he taken? What ultimately became of him?

It would seem that this courageous civil servant who "threw protocol to the wind to save human lives" was abandoned diplomatically by both his American and his Swedish sponsors and allowed to languish in the Russian prison system. But the memory of his heroism was kept alive by those he had snatched from the Nazi death apparatus. In July 1979, the American Jewish Committee, at a press conference, announced the formation of a Free Wallenberg Committee. In 1981 Congressman Tom Lantos, whose wife, Annette, had been rescued by Wallenberg, sponsored legislation, with the active support of the AJC, to confer honorary U.S. citizenship upon Wallenberg-only the second time in history that such an honor had been bestowed upon a non-American.

The conferral of citizenship gave the United States a "legal basis to pursue the case of the ultimate American hostage." The mounting outside pressure, as well as internal political changes within the former Soviet Union, led to a partial opening of the Russian archives and the creation of a Swedish-Russian Commission to investigate Wallenberg's fate.

On January 12, 2001, after ten years of archival research, a press conference was scheduled in Stockholm to unveil the long-awaited findings. But what emerged was not one document but two: The Russian working group and the Swedish working group issued quite different and contradictory reports. They offered alternative explanations as to why Wallenberg had been arrested and what had become of him. In addition, three independent researchers, using newly released materials and testimonies of eyewitnesses, came to their own conclusions.

Dr. William Korey, who has extensively researched the Wallenberg case and written on the subject previously for the American Jewish Committee (The Wallenberg Mystery: Fifty-five Years Later, 2000), analyzes these five reports in the present volume. He traces the snags that befell the official inquiry and the cover-ups that resulted in missing documents and officially sanctioned hoaxes. The investigation that began in a spirit of collaborative collegial inquiry descended into a fractious exploration, resulting in the emergence of two irreconcilable reports. Piecing together the evidence and the conclusions of each of the investigations, Korey weaves a fascinating mystery story, which still has no resolution.

Accounting for the fate of Raoul Wallenberg has been on the agenda of the American Jewish Committee for more than two decades, and Dr. Korey's analysis advances our understanding. We will not abandon the inquiry until all questions about this hero's fate are answered, and his memory honored through a full disclosure of the truth.

David A. Harris
Executive Director
The American Jewish Committee

Preface
Congressman Tom Lantos

My wife, Annette, and I owe our lives to Raoul Wallenberg.

On March 19, 1944, the Nazi Wehrmacht stormed into Hungary and occupied our native city, Budapest. We and other Jews had suffered abuse, humiliation, and financial loss under Hungary's anti-Semitic laws for some years before Nazi troops actually marched through the streets of Hungary. Annette's family's jewelry store had been seized before the occupation, and her father had become a chauffeur for the Hungarian thug who was given the store. Sometime between March and December 1944, her father was one of many Budapest Jews who were lined up along the banks of the Danube River, shot, and their bodies thrown into the river.

My uncle, who was a professor, lost his position at the university well before the occupation. He and my male cousins, who were a few years older than I, were forced to serve the Hungarian military which was then fighting with Germany against the Soviet Union on the eastern front. They were not soldiers; they were not trusted to carry arms. They were forced laborers, who carried baggage and dug trenches for the troops. Not one of my male relatives lived to return to Hungary.

Conditions were difficult before March 1944, but became much worse during the occupation. With the German military came the infamous Adolf Eichmann, who had orders to exterminate the Jewish population of Hungary. By the end of that summer, most of the Jews outside Budapest had been sent to the gas chambers at Auschwitz, which ultimately claimed nearly 600,000 of the 700,000 Jews living in Hungary before the war.

Shortly after the Germans' arrival, I was sent to a forced labor battalion north of Budapest, where I was part of a group of Jewish teenagers required to maintain a key bridge on the Budapest-Vienna rail line. I managed to escape from the camp, but was caught and nearly beaten to death. Fearing for my life and with nothing to lose, I attempted a second escape and this time I succeeded in reaching Budapest. My blond hair and blue eyes allowed me to blend in, but I lived in fear that my Jewish identity would be discovered if I were ordered by a Nazi soldier to drop my pants.

I made my way to the apartment where my aunt was living. My only relative to survive the war, she and hundreds of other desperate Jews were there crammed into a Wallenberg "safe house"-one of the apartment buildings that Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg had rented and placed under Swedish diplomatic protection at the request of the United States and with American financial assistance. As a teenager in occupied Budapest, I worked with the anti-Nazi underground, foraging for food, medicine, and supplies for those in the safe house.

In addition to providing limited protection for Jews who were able to get into these "safe houses," Wallenberg created and issued Schutzpasse (protective passports) to Jews. These documents specified

that the holder of the Schutzpass was under the protection of the Royal Swedish Government and would emigrate to Sweden as soon as conditions permitted. Wallenberg passed these out to Jews in an effort to save them from extermination camps. Through his efforts, tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews were saved.

Annette, like me, lost most of her family in the Holocaust. She and her mother survived the nine months of Nazi occupation in a diplomatic residence on the outskirts of the city. In December 1944, at the height of the battle between Nazi and Soviet forces for control of the city, Annette, her mother, and a few others were able to reach Switzerland because of an agreement that Wallenberg had negotiated with German authorities.

Wallenberg was arrested by Soviet troops in January 1945, just a few days after the Red Army liberated Budapest from German occupation. He was never again seen outside prison. There were numerous reports of sightings of the Swede by other prisoners, but there have been few credible reports since about 1980. Despite repeated requests to Soviet officials for information and the establishment of a number of investigative commissions, the full story of Wallenberg's disappearance is still not known.

Raoul Wallenberg was a member of Sweden's most distinguished, powerful, and wealthy family. He had endless horizons and opportunities before him. But he voluntarily left the security, comfort, and affluence of peaceful Stockholm to go to the hell of Budapest. With courage that defies description, he placed his own frail, unarmed body between the Nazi war machine and its intended innocent victims.

Annette and I had two goals in our efforts concerning Wallenberg. First, we sought to win his freedom from Soviet imprisonment. We informed others in Congress and leaders in every administration about Wallenberg's plight, and we encouraged them to join us in pressing U.S. government officials to raise his case with Soviet and Russian leaders. Second, we sought to honor Wallenberg for his incredible humanitarian service and share his heroic legacy with the world. Although there is still no final and definitive information about Wallenberg's fate, recently there has been no lack of interest and certainly no lack of effort in trying to determine what happened to him. Unfortunately, we have been more successful in raising awareness of his compassionate service to his fellow men and honoring him than in saving his life.

Annette began her efforts to rescue Wallenberg in the early 1970s, almost a decade before I was elected to Congress. At that time, believing that Wallenberg had perished in the Gulag, she began speaking to high school students as a way of spreading the word about his heroic mission, and she organized others to do the same. In our family we considered this work to be our memorial to our family members who perished in the Holocaust.

On November 7, 1977, I read a small paragraph in the New York Times that quoted Simon Wiesenthal as saying that he had located Raoul Wallenberg alive in a Soviet mental hospital. From that time on, Annette devoted herself to the attempt to rescue Wallenberg from the Gulag. She tried to solicit the assistance and interest of Swedish authorities, public officials, newspapers and columnists, but they all had the same general response-the story of a man who had disappeared thirty years ago was not newsworthy; no one would be interested.

Annette's first breakthrough in her efforts to capture public attention for Wallenberg's cause came through the auspices of the American Jewish Committee. In 1979, after listening to her story and looking at the evidence she had collected, AJC offered to hold a press conference for her and Wallenberg's halfsister, Nina Lagergren, to enable them to tell Wallenberg's story to the world. The press conference resulted in an article in the New York Times, and from then on there was growing interest in Raoul Wallenberg. He was no longer a forgotten hero.

One of the first political efforts to encourage the U.S. government to raise the issue of Wallenberg with Soviet leaders came in 1979 when President Jimmy Carter held a national radio call-in program. Individuals selected to ask the president questions were chosen from postcards sent in advance. Annette, who had established the International Free Wallenberg Committee a few years earlier, decided that this opportunity to raise the Wallenberg case must be seized. She sent in a number of postcards with her name and telephone number, and, amazingly, she was one of a handful chosen to ask the president a question.

The questions were not screened in advance, but White House officials did call to let her know that her name had been selected and that she would be able to ask the president a question on national radio. The question she asked, of course, was whether the president would raise the issue of Raoul Wallenberg with Soviet leaders. Jimmy Carter promised that he would, and he later confirmed that he had done so.

For most of the millions of Americans who heard Annette's question, Raoul Wallenberg was totally unknown. Because of the publicity her question generated, however, the news media suddenly began to take an interest in the Swedish humanitarian. Annette was invited to appear on CBS's program 60 Minutes, where she was interviewed by Dan Rather. The program's twenty-minute segment on Wallenberg was the first national news media attention given to the issue.

In 1980, my election to Congress to represent a district in California gave us a new opportunity to seek the release of Raoul Wallenberg and to call attention to his humanitarian service. When I arrived in Washington, the first piece of legislation that I introduced in the House of Representatives was a bill to make Raoul Wallenberg an honorary citizen of the United States-the second individual after Sir Winston Churchill to be so honored. After a tough uphill battle that took nine months, the Congress adopted my legislation. President Ronald Reagan signed the legislation at a moving ceremony in the White House Rose Garden. We were joined on that occasion by Wallenberg's halfsister and halfbrother, Nina Lagergren and Guy von Dardel.

Our purpose in granting Wallenberg honorary citizenship was to give him the same kind of help that he had given to so many Hungarian Jews-to use an extension of citizenship in an effort to save lives. By making him an honorary citizen, the U.S. government had greater legitimacy and justification for raising his case with Soviet officials.

The congressional hearings that were held in connection with the citizenship legislation and the publicity that we were able to focus on Wallenberg did a great deal to raise his profile internationally and with the U.S. and other governments. During the Reagan administration, the Wallenberg case was discussed with Soviet officials on numerous occasions. I discussed the matter with Secretary of State George Shultz and other State Department and White House officials. As a member of Congress and head of numerous delegations that visited the Soviet Union during the 1980s, I personally raised the Wallenberg case many times. The citizenship legislation also called for periodic congressional hearings to report on efforts to secure the release of Wallenberg. As a member of the House International Relations Committee, I participated in all those hearings.

Once the Soviet Union began to disintegrate in 1989, we redoubled our efforts to gain information and to secure Wallenberg's release. By this time, however, credible reports of sightings of Wallenberg within the Soviet prison system had virtually ceased, but we did not give up hope that he might still be found alive. During the Mikhail Gorbachev era, we continued to press the Soviet government for information, hoping that glasnost would increase our access to information about Wallenberg's fate. I raised the issue with high-level Soviet officials, as did a number of senior officials in the first Bush administration, but none of us were successful in breaking through the Soviet wall of silence.

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to an opening of information sources that had previously been closed to us. Former Soviet officials-some to raise money and some to cleanse their consciences-provided new information about Wallenberg. Documentary evidence, however, was extremely limited, and most of the new material raised more questions than it answered. Following the establishment of the Russian Federation, I continued to press the Wallenberg case with President Boris Yeltsin and the new government officials. President Clinton and senior U.S. government officials also raised the case.

As a result of these efforts, various investigations and joint commissions have been established in the hope of providing new information on Wallenberg. Some of these efforts are insightfully summarized and analyzed in this excellent volume by Bill Korey. The reports from the Swedish and Russian working groups and the independent consultants Susan Ellen Mesinai, Susanne Berger, and Marvin W. Makinen with Ari D. Kaplan are extremely important in furthering our knowledge of the Wallenberg case. Unfortunately, in spite of the greater openness in Russia over the past decade and the work of dedicated investigators, the Wallenberg mystery is still not solved.

The second goal Annette and I had, to honor Wallenberg and to make his compassionate deeds known, has been more successful. The honorary citizenship legislation that the Congress adopted, in addition to providing us with legal grounds for raising this case with Soviet officials, generated news stories that made a major contribution to increasing public knowledge about Wallenberg. It is no accident that within a couple of years of the signing of the citizenship legislation, a television miniseries was broadcast, with Richard Chamberlain playing the role of Wallenberg.

Other actions to raise his profile and to honor his work followed. One significant step was legislation that Congressman Bill Lowery of California and I introduced in 1985 to change the name of the section of 15th Street, S.W., between Independence Avenue and Maine Avenue in Washington, D.C., to Raoul Wallenberg Place. This is the street on which the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is located, and so it is particularly meaningful that the address of this important national institution is 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, S.W. This renaming took place when the location for the Holocaust Museum had already been determined, but before the building was completed. Coincidentally and significantly, the ceremony to lay the cornerstone for the museum took place on October 5, 1988-the seventh anniversary of the Rose Garden ceremony when the Raoul Wallenberg honorary citizenship legislation was signed.

Shortly after the name change was adopted, a brass plaque was placed to mark the renaming of the street. The text of the plaque, now located on the corner of the Holocaust Museum building, reads:

Raoul Wallenberg's mission of mercy on behalf of the United States during World War II is unprecedented in the history of mankind. He is responsible for saving tens of thousands of lives during the Holocaust. A shining light in a dark and depraved world, he proved that one person who has the courage to care can make a difference.

Another important honor for Wallenberg was the adoption by Congress of legislation to place a bust of the Swedish humanitarian on permanent display in the U.S. Capitol. An outstanding bronze bust by Israeli artist Miri Margolin, the aunt of former Israeli prime minister Benyamin Netanyahu, was placed on the first floor of the Capitol. The bust was a gift to the Congress and the American people by Lillian Hoffman, a Colorado philanthropist.

One more important tribute to Wallenberg was the issuance of an American stamp by the U.S. Postal Service on April 24, 1997. The stamp features a profile portrait of Wallenberg on the telephone. In the background, a group of Holocaust survivors look over his shoulder. A Schutzpass, the protective passport document that he issued, is shown in the upper left corner. This commemorative stamp will

help us remember this beacon of hope that shined in history's darkest moment.

My wife and I welcome Bill Korey's outstanding book, which provides an excellent summary and analysis of the most recent information we have concerning the life and tragedy of Raoul Wallenberg. We commend Bill for his scholarship and his fine presentation. We also commend the American Jewish Committee for its commitment to human rights and the fight against discrimination and racism. The decision of the AJC to publish this book is only the most recent example of a long and welcome tradition of commitment to fighting injustice and one that helps to keep the heroic spirit of Raoul Wallenberg alive.

Tom Lantos
U.S. Representative from California
Ranking Member
House International Relations Committee

New Investigations New Questions
The January 12, 2001, Stockholm Press Conference

A BROODING, SOLEMN ATMOSPHERE, punctuated by one fervent mea culpa after another, enveloped the long-awaited press conference on January 12, 2001, in Stockholm. It was on that occasion that the repeatedly delayed, long overdue, and much anticipated studies by the Swedish-Russian Working Group on the fate of Raoul Wallenberg were released. The findings were a matter of intense worldwide interest, for Wallenberg was no ordinary figure. The UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, had singled him out as the "role model" for "moral behavior in the face of evil and injustice."1

But of course the role model never experienced personal recognition for his incomparable deeds. During his lifetime he received no high honors or peace prizes, no international acclaim, no encomiums from journalists, historians, church leaders, or statesmen. He never had a medal pinned on his chest, received an honorary degree, or heard the applause of the influential and the powerful. Nor did he ever experience the homely, profound satisfaction of human interaction with those whose lives he saved. To the contrary, through a mysterious chain of causation-yet to be completely unraveled-dark forces swallowed him, and "reasons of state" and an almost incomprehensible, Kafkaesque inertia kept him buried-dead or alive-in the belly of the beast where he underwent metamorphosis from hero into spectral nonperson.

Amid the horrors of the Holocaust and the near universal indifference of bystanders to the fate of Europe's Jews, Wallenberg was a towering moral exception, an individual who demonstrated, as Elie Wiesel noted, "what could have been done to save Jewish lives if more people had cared."2 Annan wondered aloud "why were there so few Raouls?" On the day of the press conference, the Times of London filed a story calling attention to "the example that he set [which has] exercised extraordinary power." The Times piece focused on his personal rescue of 20,000 Jewish lives, "an astonishing number for a single relatively unimportant official." That same day, a prominent official in Moscow, Aleksandr Yakovlev, gave the figure as 30,000, while Wallenberg's superior in the U.S. War Refugee Board estimated as early as June 1945 that Wallenberg's work in Hungary "paved the way for saving the lives of perhaps 100,000 Jews."3

The reports released on January 12 were nearly ten years in the making. In September 1991, the Swedish-Russian Working Group began its investigation into what happened to Raoul Wallenberg-and why-after he was seized by the Soviet military on January 17, 1945, and disappeared into the Gulag. The joint working group was created at what seemed a propitious moment. The newly appointed head of the KGB, Vadim Bakatin, was intent on transforming the secret police agency and planned an

unprecedented opening of its files. The prevailing mood was one of goodwill, and a rare sense of optimism pervaded the discussions of independent investigators.

The collapse of the Soviet regime and Mikhail Gorbachev's presidency of the USSR suffocated many of Bakatin's bold initiatives, including those related to the Wallenberg case. Boris Yeltsin, the chief of the truncated Russian Federation, appointed a series of hacks from the traditional police bureaucracy to supervise the primary security agency of the state. Bakatin's planned reforms were simply buried. Within only a few months of the working group's inception, the pace of the official inquiry slowed considerably. Target dates for reaching conclusions were repeatedly missed, and independent investigations into archives were halted. The head of the Russian government's Committee for Archival Affairs, Rudolf Pikhoya, complained bitterly that the KGB had deliberately classified certain documents on Wallenberg as "operational intelligence" and, thereby, closed them to public scrutiny.4

Still, the Swedish-Russian Working Group plodded forward, holding a total of fifteen formal meetings along with a large number of informal ones in small groups. Some 200 documents from Russian archives were made available to the Swedish members of the group, but the KGB and its successor, the Federal Security Bureau, did not accede to all the requests for documents. About forty former KGB officials were interviewed, but a number of former KGB chiefs or their deputies refused to meet representatives of the working group. What the KGB provided fell far short of full and unrestricted access to the historical record.

The gravitas-and at least the semblance of the historicity-of the Stockholm press conference were reflected in the seventy-one blue binders of newly declassified documents sitting on a shelf like so many mute witnesses behind the seated Russian and Swedish members of the working group. But a commensurate sense of moral and historical weightiness was not reflected in the approved statement. A joint press release attempted a rhetorical and logical impossibility: setting a high-minded consensual tone while describing a fractious investigative process that was ultimately a fiasco. The group paid tribute to Wallenberg and his "self-sacrificing and invaluable efforts to save Jews in Hungary"5 while it pronounced its judgment that the "trials that befell him" in January 1945 and afterward could not but "arouse deep bitterness and compassion." Wallenberg's arrest was declared to have been "illegal" and the actions taken by the Soviet government nothing less then "criminal."

Tributes to Wallenberg were accompanied by laudatory exchanges about the friendly relations between the Russian and Swedish members of the working group. It was to be "emphasized," read the release, that "both sides have taken account of each other's opinions during the course of the work." The "cooperation" was characterized as "fruitful" and "in many ways, unparalleled." The result of this cooperative effort helped "create an atmosphere of confidence" between the two countries.

The high-flown rhetoric of these verbal bouquets must surely have embarrassed some of the key participants, for the fact is that the Swedish group encountered great difficulty obtaining information from Russian archives through their Russian colleagues. Their discomfiture must have been especially acute in light of the most stunning revelation at the press conference: the working groups had failed to reach a common conclusion. After ten years of supposedly collaborative collegial inquiry, the Swedes and the Russians issued two separate, contradictory, and wholly unbridgeable reports.

Running only thirty-four pages in length, the Russian report concluded that Wallenberg had died on July 17, 1947. Vyacheslav Tuchnin, the head of the group, pronounced himself "99 percent" certain that Wallenberg had been shot on that day.6 As for the 1 percent possibility that he had not perished then, Tuchnin chose not to elaborate. The far more voluminous Swedish report, totaling 362 pages-215 of text, the balance of documents-concluded that the evidence was incomplete and uncertain, making it "impossible to come to any firm conclusion about what happened."7 The head of the Swedish group,

Hans Magnusson, observed that because definitive documentation of Wallenberg's death had not been produced, "therefore, we cannot exclude that he lived much longer."8 From his perspective, there was no "sustainable evidence" to establish for a certainty that Wallenberg had been murdered in July 1947.

The issuance of two irreconcilable reports produced a profound sense of anticlimax and irresolution at the press conference. But the mea culpa offered personally by Sweden's prime minister, Göran Persson, was more dramatic still, and even more historically significant. Before offering an abject apology for the failure of his government to conduct an aggressive search for the truth about the fate of its heroic diplomat, especially in the critical first years after his disappearance, Persson underscored and even extended the major theme of the Swedish working group's report. Noting that "since there is no unequivocal evidence of what happened to Wallenberg," he asserted that "it cannot be said that Raoul Wallenberg is dead."9 Up to that moment, no one in a position of public authority had ventured so close to explicitly stating the possibility that Wallenberg might still be alive. If he were alive, he would be nearing ninety years of age.

Persson's comments were brief, but they were memorably stinging in their criticism of Sweden's policy on Wallenberg during the first few years after his arrest by the Soviets. "Criticism," he said, was very much warranted "of the way in which the case was handled…." He would not blink the facts that were elaborated upon in the official report: "it is now clear that more energetic and purposeful action on the part of Sweden during the 1940s could have led to a more successful outcome for Raoul Wallenberg…." On behalf of his government, he expressed "our deepest regrets" to Wallenberg's relatives for Sweden's "mistakes."

Directly contradicting the press release of the Swedish-Russian Working Group, the prime minister went out of his way to stress that Stockholm did not regard the investigation into the fate of Wallenberg as closed. The joint group release had suggested precisely that: with the publication of the two reports, it said, "the group is concluding its work." In sharp contrast, Persson said: "I promise that our efforts to obtain an answer to what really happened to Raoul Wallenberg will be continued."

If the purpose for establishing the Swedish-Russian Working Group had been to bring closure to the Wallenberg trauma, it ended in failure. Magnusson's comments and the policy statement of the Swedish prime minister suggested that the end of the Wallenberg saga was nowhere in sight. Adding to the uncertainty were the reports of three independent consultants to the Swedish-Russian Working Group: Susan Ellen Mesinai of New York; Professor Marvin W. Makinen, a microbiologist from the University of Chicago; and Susanne Berger, a freelance journalist for European publications based in Washington, D.C. Regrettably, media reports of January 12 gave only scant attention to the consultants' reports-even though they were released at a separate press conference on that day in Stockholm. They were richly documented and warranted close scrutiny. Some of the consultants' findings were incorporated in the official Swedish working group report; some appeared in a more generalized form in articles written for the press either by another journalist or by one of the consultants.

The Independent Consultants' Concerns

An especially searching essay drawing upon the consultants' investigations was that of Arne Ruth, the former editor in chief of the important Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter. Appearing in the Washington Post just days before the Stockholm press conference, it may have played a role in influencing both the Swedish working group panelists and Prime Minister Persson to issue their forthright apologies. Ruth began by recalling a question posed in Stockholm in 1993 by a visiting prominent American congressman: "Why hadn't Sweden long ago included a figure of such moral stature [as Raoul Wallenberg] more prominently among its national heroes?"10 Even now, seven years later, Ruth observed, "Wallenberg is still not fully recognized in his native country."

Far more unconscionable, however, was Sweden's past handling of the Wallenberg mystery, according to the former editor. While the Soviet Union stonewalled and lied repeatedly about Wallenberg, "political pragmatism has marked Swedish handling of the case." The Swedish government "never vigorously pursued his release from Soviet custody." Especially devastating was Ruth's report of a secret memorandum of 1957 by Sweden's foreign minister accepting the Soviet Union's explanation that Wallenberg had died of a heart attack a decade earlier. The memo's cynicism and opportunism spoke for themselves: "A friendly relationship with Moscow," the memo noted, must not be disturbed by "a continuous grudge" against the USSR.

"Passivity became policy," Ruth concluded, observing that between 1956 and 1979 the Wallenberg case was never raised in Swedish diplomatic correspondence with Moscow. Though Wallenberg's mother and stepfather persisted until their deaths in calling for a full investigation, "official Sweden met their demands with thinly veiled impatience." Sweden's passivity and subordination of humanitarian concern for Wallenberg to its foreign policy were also the subject of Susanne Berger's report, which Ruth clearly relied upon, though her work was not explicitly cited in his article.

The rest of Ruth's essay drew directly upon the research of the consultants to question the veracity of Moscow's most recent argument that the July 1947 date for Wallenberg's alleged death was incontrovertible. How was the truth to be ascertained? The Swedish editor was firm in his answer: "real progress is possible if direct access to documents is granted and a systematic evaluation of the material is pursued." His conclusion echoed the thoughts, if not the very language, of Wallenberg's halfbrother, Guy von Dardel, who wrote the "Introductory Remarks" for the consultants' reports. He pointedly declared that "the most important result of all our efforts" was to obtain "direct access to documentation" from the archives.11

Von Dardel was a member of the working group from the beginning and so, when he referred to "our efforts," he was speaking about its findings-specifically those of the Swedish members and the consultants. Whatever progress the Swedish-Russian Working Group made was a consequence of direct and even indirect access to Russian archival sources. Von Dardel proceeded to take cognizance of the possibility that "some documentation … may have been destroyed." Nonetheless, be believed that "more than enough archival material remains." This was inarguably the most important contribution made by the independent investigation of the consultants. Their findings, directly or indirectly, pointed to archival sources that had to be explored and to "crucial" documentation that required examination and analysis if "real progress" was to be made in determining Wallenberg's fate.

Three days before the appearance of Arne Ruth's essay, Dagens Nyheter, the journal of which he had been the editor, featured an article by Susan Mesinai that illustrated how research could point to documentary archival sources that required examination.12 She focused on the extraordinarily curious episode of October 1989 when Nina Lagergren, Raoul's halfsister, and Per Anger, his closest diplomatic colleague, were invited to Moscow as official guests of the Soviets. Upon their arrival they were given a number of Raoul's possessions, including his passport, car registration, address and calendar book for his Budapest mission, a gold cigarette or powder case, and various types of foreign currency, mainly Hungarian. The Soviet hosts explained to their guests that these personal items had been unexpectedly found when old wooden shelves in the KGB archives were being replaced and the sack carrying these items fell to the floor.13

Requests by Lagergren and Anger to question the KGB employee who supposedly found the sack were refused. But of far greater significance was Mesinai's finding that the Soviet system strictly regulated how a prisoner's valuables and money were handled. If a prisoner's property was not confiscated, it would follow him through the Gulag system-whether to prison, to camp, or to a psychiatric facility. When he died, the prisoner's possessions would either be turned over to his relatives or would be

confiscated by the state within six months. Had Wallenberg died before 1989, the package would certainly have been confiscated by the state or shipped to his relatives in Sweden.

In Mesinai's judgment, the episode suggested that Wallenberg may have died in early 1989. The sudden appearance of Wallenberg's valuables and money clearly warranted careful examination of all documents that related to Wallenberg's known movements within the Gulag. In their report, the Swedish members of the working group raised this issue in the sharpest terms and demanded an answer. A related matter concerned the returned currency. Assuming the Soviet officials returning it were required to verify the amount found in the sack, they would have needed to consult the original receipt for the funds taken from Wallenberg as well as the financial records of his debit/credit account. Were such documents located and in what form? If the truth could be ascertained regarding this apparently minor matter, it could throw significant light on the basic question as to what kind of file existed on the Swedish diplomat.

The Wallenberg mystery could be resolved once and for all only through the full disclosure of all archival sources and other extant documentation. This leitmotif runs through developments in November-December, just prior to the January 12 press conference; through the two reports of the Swedish-Russian Working Group and the reports of the group's consultants; and through developments after the January 12 event but closely related to it.

What should be noted, too, was the conspicuous, intriguing absence of official U.S. representation at the Stockholm event. The United States, after all, had played a central role in launching Wallenberg's rescue mission. The question naturally arose whether at this point, when archival disclosure by the Russians was all-important, the United States would be prepared to use its political leverage to obtain it.

Despite the solemnity of the January 12 event and the outpouring of emotional apologies, the decade-long inquiry had produced no conclusive result about the fate of the greatest savior of Jewish life during the Holocaust and, thus, no closure for the profound trauma afflicting the conscience of the world.

The Yakovlev Commission Bombshell

Even as the Swedish-Russian Working Group made final preparations to release their reports, a veritable bombshell exploded in Moscow, obliterating the fifty-year-old Russian account of what happened to Wallenberg. On December 6, 2000, a separate commission created by President Vladimir Putin-the Presidential Commission on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression-utterly punctured the notorious "Smoltsov Memorandum" upon which Moscow had relied for decades in explaining what happened to Wallenberg. The disclosure could not help but bring into question the validity of the report by the Russian section of the joint working group. Unfortunately, the commission's revelation went virtually unnoticed by the media in the West, including major newspapers in the United States.

The Smoltsov Memorandum, first unveiled in February 1957 by Soviet deputy foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, was said at the time to be the only document on the Wallenberg case in the official Soviet archives. Lt. Col. A. Smoltsov, chief of health services at Lubyanka Prison, supposedly wrote the memorandum to Minister of State Security Viktor Abakumov on July 17, 1947. It reported that the prisoner "Valenberg" (as misspelled in the document) had died that day, probably of a heart attack, and his body had been cremated. For the next forty-five years the memorandum was the centerpiece of the Kremlin's official version of the conclusion to the Wallenberg tragedy. It superseded the earlier blatantly false thesis, articulated by Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Vyshinsky in August 1947, that Wallenberg was unknown to Soviet officials and had never been in the country.

Though critics continually challenged the veracity of the Smoltsov Memorandum, it remained the linchpin of the Kremlin's account of Wallenberg's alleged death in July 1947.14 In an extraordinary

demonstration of their political investment in the document, top Soviet officials in October 1989 presented Wallenberg's halfsister, Nina Lagergren, and his closest diplomatic colleague, Per Anger, with what they said was the "original" memorandum.

Lagergren and Anger had been invited as guests of the Soviet authorities at a time when Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika were in full bloom. The gift of the original memorandum was intended as a significant gesture of goodwill since the initial memorandum produced by Gromyko was but a copy. Though Lagergren and Anger contemptuously rejected the supposed original as a fraud, the Russian authorities continued to promote its authenticity even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the replacement of Gorbachev by Boris Yeltsin. That it was trotted out again and again at various forums and offered to major media sources testified to the Kremlin's continuing posture that the memorandum was a core document, the heart of its argument that Wallenberg had died in July 1947.

Now, just five weeks before the joint Swedish-Russian Working Group would submit its findings to the public, the so-called Rehabilitation Commission exposed the Smoltsov Memorandum as nothing short of a hoax perpetrated upon the world community. The Rehabilitation Commission was chaired by Aleksandr Yakovlev, the leading ideologist of glasnost, a close colleague of Gorbachev, and one held by many in the West to be a major Russian democratic reformer.

According to Yakovlev and his commission, documents at their disposal showed that Smoltsov had retired on disability leave on March 21, 1947, four months before he was supposed to have found Wallenberg dead of a heart attack and allegedly reported that event to the head of the State Security Ministry.15 Moreover, the Yakovlev Commission revealed that Smoltsov's younger son, O. Smoltsov, had testified that his father never left his home after his March retirement and did not keep in touch with his former colleagues at Lubyanka. Thus the prison health official could not have visited Wallenberg's cell on July 17 and could not have written the memorandum on his sudden death by heart attack and his alleged cremation.

The crucial Smoltsov Memorandum turned out to be one of the greatest hoaxes of the twentieth century. The names of its perpetrators were not revealed, nor was anything said about the shocking manner in which it was carried out. Finally, the commission provided no rationale for the deception.

Equally startling was the absence of an explanation of how and when the Yakovlev Commission learned about the deception. Before December 6, there had not been even a hint that Smoltsov had retired four months before he was alleged to have visited Lubyanka. How was it possible to withhold this information from the Swedish-Russian Working Group dealing with the fate of Wallenberg? Perhaps most amazingly, nothing was said concerning the hoax in the very detailed report of the Swedish group on January 12, 2001. Tragically and disturbingly, it went entirely unmentioned at the press conference in Stockholm.

While the Russian group's report carried no specific reference to the hoax, it did include an obscure and perplexing piece of information about Smoltsov and his son. The report related that Smoltsov's son was "working for the national security bodies" apparently in 1947.16 The revelation had never been made earlier. Neither the first name of the son, nor the initial letter of that name, was noted, nor was there any indication as to whether he was the "younger" son specified in the Yakovlev report. Still the disclosure was intriguing as it suggested why the elder Smoltsov, who died in 1953, might have permitted himself to be linked to the hoax.

According to the Russian group, the son had been interviewed in late May and early June 1992-only nine years before-by a member of the group, a certain A. E. Ziborov, and someone from the Russian Ministry of State Security. According to the group's official report, Smoltsov's son was reported to have

told the interviewers "that his father, prior to his discharge in 1947, was summoned urgently to the Ministry [of State Security] despite being so ill. On his return, he apparently told his son that some Swedish man had died in prison." Significantly, Smoltsov's son did not specify the month or date of his father's discharge, which would have exposed the memorandum as a hoax. And this was the first time that anyone observed that A. Smoltsov had been "so ill."

Missing in the report were precise dates crucial to the Smoltsov episode. When was he supposed to have been "summoned urgently" to the Security Ministry? How did this tale square with the Yakovlev report's account of what the "younger" Smoltsov son had said about his father not leaving his home after March 21, 1947, and having no relations with his former associates?

The highly problematic quality of the narrative did not hinder the Russian group from completely endorsing the Smoltsov Memorandum. At one point, its report declared that "in this document, the Soviet leadership first told the truth about the tragic fate of Raoul Wallenberg."17 Shortly afterward, the Russian group's report sought to respond to the long-held, multiple, and detailed criticism of the Smoltsov Memorandum. Bluntly-and stunningly-it read:

The graphological and forensic analysis of Smoltsov's report, carried out by the Russian experts in 1990 and by the Swedish experts in 1992, confirmed its authenticity.18 How the Russian group reacted to the Yakovlev Commission's shocking information remains unknown; at the very least, it must have stirred some discomfiture.

The New Version of Wallenberg's Death

Though the Yakovlev Commission performed a valuable service by unveiling details that exposed the Smoltsov Memorandum as a grand hoax, the commission perpetuated the basic line of the Kremlin's Foreign Ministry since 1957: Raoul Wallenberg had died in 1947 and, therefore, further investigation about his death was pointless. Yet the Yakovlev Commission's releases were formulated very differently from previous official announcements. Disturbingly, the new Yakovlev Commission reports assumed the surreal character of dispatches from a never-never land recalling Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland.

Oddly, the Yakovlev Commission poured out releases in a sudden flurry beginning a month before the scheduled official publication of the reports of the Swedish-Russian Working Group. The most plausible scenario was that Yakovlev, possibly at the behest of President Putin, was seeking to preempt or even upstage the Swedish-Rus- sian Working Group. Perhaps the intent was to present an apparently credible summary of what happened in 1947 in anticipation of Western doubts about the official findings. Already, on October 4, 2000, an important U.S. agency, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, had sent a letter regarding Wallenberg to the Russian ambassador in Washington, Yury V. Ushakov. The letter demanded that the Russian government "renew its efforts to account fully and credibly for Raoul Wallenberg's fate after his arrest by Soviet forces" in January 1945.19

The letter was unprecedented. Never before had the U.S. Helsinki Commission-as the commission was generally known-raised the issue directly with Moscow's ambassador. Previously, individual U.S. ambassadors at various Helsinki forums of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Madrid, Vienna, and Moscow had raised the Wallenberg matter; now a major U.S. agency sought to do so again. Eight members of the commission, including its chairman, Representative Christopher H. Smith (Republican of New Jersey) and its second-in-command, Representative Steny H. Hoyer (Democrat of Maryland), signed the letter. It was the first official letter that reminded the Russians that Wallenberg was an "honorary American citizen" whose bust had been "erected" in the prestigious U.S. Capitol in 1995. In tough language, the congressmen insisted upon "a complete accounting of [Wallenberg's] fate." Such "accounting," the letter read, was essential for Wallenberg's family, for the

people whose lives he saved, and for the world as a whole that "has benefited so profoundly from his example of courage, integrity and initiative."

It was not a communication to which Moscow could remain indifferent, especially since a copy was sent to UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, who was married to the niece of Wallenberg. The first Yakovlev Commission release came on November 13, 2000, and was carried by the authoritative Moscow wire service, Interfax.20 According to Interfax, President Putin had given "preliminary instructions" to Yakovlev to start a "rehabilitation" procedure on Wallenberg that the president promised to sign. The initial request for "rehabilitation" had been made several years earlier by Wallenberg's halfbrother, Guy von Dardel. Von Dardel had hoped this might open access to suppressed data, but he could hardly have expected that the inquiry would have such unforeseen results.

Following the investigation of the Rehabilitation Commission, Interfax reported that a decree would be prepared by the Main Military Prosecutor's Office and that Putin would likely sign it. A week prior to the press release, the Rehabilitation Commission recognized that Wallenberg had been a victim of political reprisals. Sources within the Military Prosecutor's Office had indicated that the decree "will recognize" that Wallenberg's imprisonment was "illegal," thus making rehabilitation likely.

The same release of November 13 showed that no Great Wall separated the Yakovlev Commission from the Russian group. On the contrary, the chairman of the Russian group, Vyacheslav Tuchnin, who served as head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's department covering Finland and Sweden, made the following declaration: "Not everything has been established, but there is indirect evidence that Wallenberg was killed." While Tuchnin did not provide a definitive answer on November 13, he was inclined to support "indirect evidence" about the Wallenberg killing. Regrettably, he offered no clue as to what constituted the "indirect evidence."

Incredibly enough, Tuchnin expected that the Swedes and everyone else would accept the findings, even if indirect, that Wallenberg had been killed in 1947. He went on to add that once the January 12, 2001, meeting was completed, the Swedish-Russian Working Group "will terminate its work." The Swedish leadership, of course, would take a very different position, but evidently the Russians hoped that the decree on Wallenberg's rehabilitation would finally end the affair and halt Western demands for further investigation. To assuage remaining doubts or uncertainties, he offered to make certain that should "new facts" on Wallenberg's fate be revealed, then Moscow "will definitely share them with Sweden." The comment recalled similar statements by Soviet officials in Vienna in 1988.21 It was bald-faced hypocrisy then, and it would seem this was merely a repetition.

Tuchnin's comments of November 13 signaled the launching of yet another "new" official Russian account of Wallenberg's death. Until then, the Kremlin and its agents had reiterated the refrain of the Smoltsov Memorandum: Wallenberg had probably experienced a fatal heart attack. If references to the memorandum had diminished in the past decade, the official line was simply that Wallenberg had died. Now, having undertaken a process of formally rehabilitating the Swedish rescuer of Jews, there had to be proof he had been the victim of political repression. Merely dying was insufficient to fit the bill. Tuchnin now referred to Wallenberg as having been "killed." A death that was previously characterized as the result of natural causes was now described as a deliberate premeditated act ordered by someone.

But what precisely was the nature of the deliberate act? How was Wallenberg put to death? Who ordered the deed? Who executed it, and when? Tuchnin provided no specifics on November 13: "Not everything has been established…." All that he would cling to was "indirect evidence" that he neither defined nor spelled out. Two weeks later, however, on November 27, Moscow offered one detail: Yakovlev was reported by Interfax to have stated that Wallenberg "was shot in the Lubyanka prison."22 This new official account constituted a radical departure from all past explanations; but this progress was offset by

the remarkable paucity of fact.

If Yakovlev offered no documentation, no sources, no basis for his categorical assertions, he did provide a rationale for the sudden shift in the essence of the narrative. "We must," he said, "put an end to the [Wallenberg] story, which has acquired … international significance and has been poisoning the atmosphere for a long time." Yakovlev's focus was the need to end Moscow's public-relations nightmare. The Wallenberg story had done great harm to Russia's international image, and Yakovlev apparently believed that if Russia acknowledged that its Soviet predecessor had murdered the Swedish hero, questions would cease; there is a finality to murder. Wouldn't a confession of sorts constitute a certain acknowledgment of guilt and sorrow? Perhaps now the book might be closed. It is not unlikely that Yakovlev as chairman of the Rehabilitation Commission was speaking on behalf of Putin.

No response, favorable or otherwise, however, came from Stockholm or elsewhere in the West. Perhaps the new narrative needed to be rewritten with a bit more flesh on the bones. On December 6, Yakovlev issued a much longer report. But from the beginning he sought to preclude any demand for documentation. "In spite of the fact that no documents pertaining to the Wallenberg case have survived to this day," he said, "there is enough evidence that the Swedish diplomat … did not die a natural death, but was executed by shooting."

A New "Alice in Wonderland" Theme

What was the undocumented "evidence" that was deemed sufficiently conclusive to prove that Wallenberg had been executed by shooting? The evidence Yakovlev provided was nothing less than astonishing, even dumbfounding, in its thinness. He said he had been told about the execution by the former head of the KGB, Vladimir Kryuchkov. Presumably, Kryuchkov had disclosed the information sometime in 1989 when both served in the Politburo. If this was indeed the case, why hadn't Yakovlev made it public earlier? And wouldn't an inquisitive listener have asked for concrete details? How? When? Where? By whom? What happened to the corpse? Was it conceivable that no record had been made of an execution? Yakovlev's brief bare-bones statement was simply mind-boggling.

Besides, Kryuchkov was hardly the most reliable of Politburo members. An article in Izvestiia on July 12, 1990 (entitled "What Is Wrong with My 'Memory'?") about a television appearance by the KGB chieftain a week earlier, on July 6, provided insight into his ideological predilections regarding extremism and anti-Semitism.23 He had been asked how the KGB regarded Pamyat, a notorious xenophobic and anti-Semitic organization whose rowdy demonstrations in the streets at the time were generating increasing concern internally and externally. After noting that Pamyat was comprised of a number of wings, Kryuchkov had chosen not to characterize Pamyat as a whole and, instead, had observed that one of the groups was "patriotic" and "useful." He had promptly hailed the unnamed faction.

The author of the article in Izvestiia, Pavel Gutionov, was shocked at the KGB leader's peculiar notions. Observing that, as a reporter, he had meticulously covered all the various Pamyat factions, Gutionov asked: "I cannot possibly understand which did Mr. Kryuchkov have in mind?" The query was followed by the names of every Pamyat faction leader, each wilder and crazier than the next. "I am not aware of any other," commented the amused, if irritated, reporter. Kryuchkov's extremist ideological affinities were made even more evident in August 1991 when he played a leading role in the infamous conspiracy to kidnap Mikhail Gorbachev. Was Kryuchkov someone who could provide credible evidence?

The same day that Yakovlev spoke of Wallenberg's execution and referred to Kryuchkov as a decisive source, the Rehabilitation Commission invited an Interfax reporter to review its materials on Wallenberg. Included was the explosive information about the Smoltsov hoax. No doubt the invitation's intent was to show the commission's honest intentions by countering the embarrassment caused by the

memorandum. The Wallenberg file, it found, noted three other bits of "evidence" about Wallenberg's fate, but each was also surprisingly lame.

The first involved the uncorroborated account of a certain criminal, E. Sosovsky, who reported that the commander of his Gulag at a time of personal distress had revealed to him that he had taken a Swede for a walk in the woods and shot him. A second unsubstantiated version involved a story told by a Z. Alexandrov, a former KGB officer, who reported that in the mid-sixties his colleague, Nedosetin, whose work involved Scandinavian countries, had told him that "Wallenberg was actually executed by shooting as a German spy."24 Finally, the reporter was given the well-known secret memo of Vyshinsky to Molotov on May 14, 1947, which was supposed to suggest Wallenberg's "liquidation." Here the reporter made the same mistake as some had made earlier, that the pronoun yego meant "his" (liquidation) rather than "its," as many would conclude.

At the conclusion of the December 6 Interfax story, two additional odd points were made. First, the Yakovlev Commission was reported to have concluded that when the world learned that Wallenberg was in the Soviet Union and when this information was personally disclosed to Stalin, the "USSR prosecutor" decided to liquidate Wallenberg. The identity of the "USSR prosecutor" was not revealed, nor was any concrete evidence produced to buttress this intriguing observation. The second point was even more puzzling. The commission had surmised "alternatively" that "it is possible" that both Wallenberg and his driver, Vilmos Langfelder, died as a result of the poor conditions in the Soviet prisons and that all pertinent records were destroyed to cover up the crime of their apprehension in Budapest.

Did the second "alternative" thesis and "possibility" mean that Yakovlev and his associates were actually uncertain that Wallenberg was executed by shooting? Despite these unsettling narratives, Yakovlev and his colleagues were solidly committed to the execution theme. The contradiction was glaring.

On the same day Yakovlev and his commission issued its two separate releases, there was yet a third, this by the head of the Russian Prosecutor General's Office for rehabilitation of victims of political repression, Galina Vesnovskaya.25 She acknowledged for the first time publicly that Wallenberg had never been formally sentenced for any crime during the Stalin era. If he had not been sentenced, how could he have been executed? On what legal grounds, however transparently false, could a death sentence have been carried out?

Vesnovskaya did not seek to answer these questions. She focused instead on the question of how Wallenberg could be rehabilitated if he had never been formally declared a criminal or convicted and sentenced for criminal activity. Casuistry prevailed. Although no criminal case had been initiated against Wallenberg, a 1991 law would permit rehabilitation to take place; this permitted the Rehabilitation Commission to submit its petition for rehabilitation that day to Russia's Main Military Prosecutor's Office.

The episode was reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. The authoritarian queen in that amusing, richly ironic tale insisted upon the sentence being imposed first, before the verdict was rendered. In the new version, the Soviet state improved upon the cruel absurdity: it rendered no verdict but imposed a death sentence. Thus Yakovlev and Putin could get their rehabilitation even if the legal ruling was questionable.

In one respect, however, the Russians did have a legal rationale. The Yakovlev Commission had made it abundantly evident on December 6 that Wallenberg and Langfelder were diplomatic employees of the Swedish mission in Budapest when they were arrested and therefore held diplomatic immunity,

augmented by Sweden's status as a neutral country. When Wallenberg and Langfelder were seized and detained, that action was "illegal." The fact that they were "kept in Soviet prisons as prisoners of war on suspicion of espionage" itself warranted a solemn act of rehabilitation without concern as to verdict or sentence. Yet the Yakovlev Commission's reference to "suspicions of espionage" could not fail to open a new can of worms.

Denials and More Humpty-Dumpty

Not surprisingly, Guy von Dardel reacted with irritation and anger to the sudden outpouring of special releases from the Rehabilitation Commission on December 6. The next day he issued a bitter statement that focused not on the core theme of the commission that his halfbrother, Raoul, had been executed by shooting in 1947 but rather on the acknowledged absence of any verifiable documentation of the shooting.26 Seizing upon Yakovlev's claim that "enough evidence" existed to point to the execution by shooting in 1947, von Dardel angrily demanded that if the Rehabilitation Commission had "concrete evidence that conclusively proves that Raoul Wallenberg was executed in 1947, Mr. Yakovlev should present this material immediately."

But as the release indicated and Yakovlev acknowledged, no such evidence would be forthcoming. In von Dardel's mind, this was utterly inconceivable. "It is very simple," he emphasized, "documentation has to exist if an execution did indeed take place." He was convinced of the indispensable linkage between some form of documentation and the execution. Otherwise, Yakovlev and the commission were engaged in "the presentation of rumors as fact" and "inappropriate manipulation of public opinion." He urged the Swedish government "to strongly object" to the "manipulation."

This angry response was predictable. After all, von Dardel had petitioned the commission to rehabilitate his halfbrother precisely so that he might receive and study "the related materials and files that will now be open to us as a result of clearing Raoul Wallenberg of all charges of wrongdoing." Indeed, he went out of his way to welcome the commission's decision to rehabilitate. It appears, however, that the clever Russian bureaucrats had outmaneuvered him. They had no intention of altering a hoary construct of the Russian security services-even if its essence, the Smoltsov Memorandum-was an admitted hoax, and even less of opening secret files.

One aspect of von Dardel's rebuttal to Moscow's insistence upon the fact of Wallenberg's death in 1947 should be noted here, though it will be elaborated upon in greater detail later. He contended that "independent consultants" to the Swedish-Russian Working Group had developed "critical new findings which point to Raoul Wallenberg's survival well beyond 1947."27 As a "consultant" himself, he was aware of their findings. In addition to the "independent consultants," he also knew that the official Swedish group had found that the certainty of Wallenberg's death in 1947 was by no means conclusive; indeed, a significant degree of evidence pointed in the same direction as that of the independent consultants.

The Yakovlev Commission's final report was issued on December 22 with a statement by the office of Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov, the state's highest legal official. Raoul Wallenberg and his driver, Vilmos Langfelder, were formally declared to be "victims of political repression" and, therefore, rehabilitated. The statement went on to say that the two had perished in Soviet prisons, and it had become impossible to ascertain where and how they died.28 The inconclusive character of the documentation stood in sharp contrast to the certainty articulated by Yakovlev a month earlier, on November 27, when he publicly registered not a single "doubt" that Wallenberg had been "shot in the Lubyanka Prison."29

On the day of the prosecutor general's rehabilitation statement, Yakovlev was interviewed on radio in Moscow and was reported by the New York Times as saying that no documents certifying Wallenberg's

execution had been found and that many documents had been destroyed.30 In the absence of documentation, his insistence upon the certainty of Wallenberg's execution was a complete non sequitur. The only source to which he could point was the oral statement made to him by the dubious Kryuchkov.

This time, Nina Lagergren, Raoul's halfsister, responded to the logical inconsistency inherent in the Rehabilitation Commission's report as she had previously commented about the absence of solid documentation: "they cannot believe that we would be satisfied with this. They must come up with concrete evidence."31 It was a refrain similar to the one articulated by her brother, Guy, on December 6. But while her brother sought the truth, the commission was seeking something else. A commission official, Andrei Artizov, was quoted in Interfax as saying "the decision of the Prosecutor General was a moral and political act, a recognition by the state that the old [Soviet] government committed a crime." For the Wallenberg family, the mea culpa hardly constituted satisfaction, especially since official deceit of the character of the Smoltsov Memorandum persisted.

One aspect of the Ustinov office statement bordered on the hilarious-if one can momentarily suspend contemplating the grand tragedy and atrocious wickedness of the arrest and imprisonment of this unparalleled hero of the Holocaust. The statement, appearing on CNN's Website, declared that Wallenberg and Langfelder had been arrested for being "socially dangerous" individuals-not for espionage or any other such crime. In the new official judgment, the arrest was without legal grounds. According to the Times's account of the statement, the Yakovlev Commission had failed to establish the true cause of the arrest and imprisonment of Wallenberg and his driver.

But what did it mean to be accused of being "socially dangerous"? What category of offenses did this appellation cover? In what document was the phrase to be found? This, in fact, was the first time the phrase had surfaced. Once again, Alice's experience in Wonderland was finding an echo. Humpty-Dumpty, with a scornful glance at Alice, firmly announced: "When I use a word it means what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less." To observers of the machinations over the supposed endgame to the Wallenberg story, the situation was becoming "curiouser and curiouser."

Why the Wallenberg Arrest: The Puzzle

Would the release on January 12, 2001, of the findings of the two separate sections of the Swedish-Russian Working Group make the Wallenberg mystery less "curiouser"? Would it help solve the two questions that had been central from the beginning: Why was Raoul Wallenberg detained in the first place? What ultimately happened to him?

The Swedish report provided valuable documentary information indicating that the previous information about the date of Wallenberg's detention by the Soviet military was in error and, in fact, that the traditional date of January 17, 1945, for the arrest, as stipulated in various biographies and studies, was incorrect. The new details sharply illuminated the question of motivation for the seizure. An official telegram from a Soviet military unit that had just taken a key Budapest location, Benczur Street, the site of the International Red Cross transport unit, carried a handwritten message stating that Wallenberg and his driver were "Detained on January 13."32 On that day, Wallenberg had voluntarily called on Soviet military officials at the site. He explained that he hadn't gone into hiding with the other members of the Swedish legation in other parts of the city because he was "responsible for the protection of 7,000 Swedish citizens [Hungarian Jews who have been given Swedish passports] in the eastern part."

The military commander in charge had ordered Wallenberg to be transferred to another commander with "due attention to his security and comfort." But, according to the Swedish study, that order had specified that Wallenberg "was not to have any contact with the outside world." On the following day, January 15, the chief of staff of one major Russian military command in Hungary telegraphed the identical message regarding Wallenberg to the chief of staff at a second top command. These earlier reports became the

basis for the message of Vladimir Dekanosov, the Soviet deputy foreign minister, to the Swedish legation in Moscow, on January 16, stating that Wallenberg was under the care of Russian troops in Budapest.

On the next day, January 17, a formal warrant for the arrest of Wallenberg was sent by the powerful Deputy Defense Minister Nikolai Bulganin to Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, the chief Soviet military official in Hungary. A copy of the warrant was sent to Viktor Abakumov, then head of SMERSH, Soviet military counterintelligence. Wallenberg was to be brought directly to Moscow. That very same day, Bulganin issued an arrest warrant for Swiss diplomats Max Meier and Harald Feller. The warrant order specified that the Swiss were to be sent to Moscow "in the same way as Wallenberg." Wallenberg was formally arrested not on January 17 but on January 19 and brought to Moscow on February 6.

The new documentation underscored that Wallenberg had been specially targeted for apprehension by the Soviet military a number of days before January 17, and that it was their intent to handle him in a distinctive manner. The initial term the Soviets used was "detained," and he was to be kept as much as possible from the outside world. A second characteristic of the manner of treatment was noted in the reference to the two Swiss officials who were to he handled like Wallenberg. The Russians issued strict orders from the beginning that Wallenberg, in the words of the Swedish report, was to be treated "humanely" and not interrogated.33

A clerk who worked for Wallenberg later testified that the Swedish diplomat had been under Soviet surveillance since January 12 and was always accompanied by Soviet officers. At the same time, the clerk noted that Wallenberg was "well treated." In the latter's plan to go to Debrecen to visit Marshal Malinovsky and negotiate the possible return of Jewish property, Wallenberg took three suitcases, a backpack, and a large sum of money. But before leaving he gave the clerk a considerable sum of Hungarian money to pay for the upkeep of Jewish welfare shelters.

The decision to seize and detain Wallenberg was clearly taken at the highest level in the Kremlin. A communication by Abakumov to Molotov on December 1, 1945, specified that the arrests of Feller and Meier were in accordance with Stalin's instructions. Stalin was also the apparent source for the order that their arrests were to be done "as in the case of Raoul Wallenberg." At the same time, detention of Wallenberg and Langfelder was to be handled in an especially gingerly way. Both were told in Budapest and later upon their arrival in Moscow that they should not regard themselves as prisoners but rather as persons in protective custody. Indeed, they were taken on a tour of the famed Moscow subway system, almost like ordinary tourists.34

The American "Spy" Angle

If Wallenberg was targeted for detention at an early stage, the key question is why? In May 1996, a major American journal carried an article with the blazingly provocative headline that Wallenberg was a "spy" or "espionage asset" for the United States.35 But though the article was supposedly based upon a six-month investigation, it offered little new information or documentation of its thesis. Indeed, except for pointing out that Iver Olsen, the representative of the U.S. War Refugee Board in Stockholm who hired Wallenberg, was also in charge of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in the Swedish capital, the article was woefully lacking in substantive data.

That Olsen functioned in this dual capacity was noted in this author's earlier monograph on Wallenberg-along with documentation that Kremlin agents had penetrated the OSS at a very early stage in the life of that U.S. intelligence service, from which the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) emerged.36 But did Wallenberg function as "an undercover agent for OSS"? The question was confronted head-on in the Swedish study. In the preparation of a detailed analysis of this allegation in its report, the Swedish group drew heavily upon extensive documents from the State Department, the OSS, and the CIA.37

The central point in the Swedish report was taken from an internal CIA document of 1955 that focused upon comments made by Iver Olsen. The report, referring to the internal CIA document, declared:

... when asked whether he [Olsen] had ever had operational contact with Raoul Wallenberg or used him operationally, Olsen repeatedly and categorically denied having done so. His contact with Raoul Wallenberg had been only in his capacity as WRB representative.38 The CIA document was then specifically quoted as saying: "Olsen was extremely emphatic on this point."

The information was hardly surprising; it was also congruent with other known data, as noted in this author's previous study. After hiring Wallenberg, Olsen stressed in initial and confidential communications to the State Department that the Swede was given to understand that his exclusive function was humanitarian-the rescue of Jews, and nothing beyond that. Moreover, the new Swedish study showed that the CIA had found no evidence that indicated Wallenberg was even aware of Olsen's links with the OSS. Besides, the very nature of Wallenberg's virtually superhuman efforts in his rescue work-laboring twenty hours a day, according to colleagues in this endeavor-precluded engaging in spying initiatives.

This did not mean, however, that the Soviet military and intelligence forces, profoundly xenophobic and deeply anxious about foreign spies, might not still have suspected Wallenberg of engaging in espionage. In May 1945, an American brigadier general who had inquired of Soviet military authorities in Budapest about the fate of Wallenberg and the Swiss diplomats, Meier and Feller, received the impression that the new Budapest authorities might have evidence that the three had possibly cooperated with the Nazis.39 An associate of Wallenberg in the Swedish legation, Lars Berg, later related that the Russian occupiers, in questioning the non-Swedish staff members as well as the Swedish diplomatic staff, has accused the legation of espionage and issuing false documents and protective papers to Hungarian fascists.

A central allegation was that some of Wallenberg's protective passports designed to help Hungarian Jews escape the Nazi death camps might have fallen into the hands of Hungarian Arrow Cross members. Data confirming this charge are unavailable. That sizable numbers of such passports ended up in wrong hands seems highly doubtful. As Wallenberg and his associates in the rescue mission were anxious and

determined to concentrate on saving Jews, meticulous care must have been taken to prevent passports from falling into the hands of non-Jews.

Wallenberg and Berg were said by Soviet interrogators to be German spies and, as for humanitarian rescue work, the Soviet questioners would maintain that it was "impossible" that Wallenberg would risk his own life to save Hungarian Jews.40 One document that did surface during the early nineties was a draft prepared in April 1956 by Foreign Minister Molotov and KGB chief Ivan Serov that reported that Abakumov had accused Wallenberg of espionage on behalf of Germany. The draft was sent to the Central Committee of the party and constituted an attempt to put all the blame for Wallenberg's death upon Abakumov. The draft was rejected by the Central Committee.41

If the main hypothesis of the Soviet interrogators was that the Swedish legation was involved in German espionage against the Soviet Union, it was also "suspected of spying for the Americans and for the British." That the latter suspicion would last for some time is indicated in the following assertion made in the Swedish report:

In an emotional outburst in 1979, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Zemskov told the Swedish Ambassador in Moscow that Raoul Wallenberg had been spying for the USA and that the Americans privately admitted this. The Swedish report carried a dozen pages of speculation on why Wallenberg had been arrested, all of them reflecting in one way or another the thought that he had been engaged in espionage.42 One of the surprising sources cited was Pavel Sudoplatov, a former top aide to the notorious Lavrenti Beria. According to Sudoplatov-as reported in the Swedish report-the chief of the SMERSH Front Directorate told him sometime in the fifties that "it was widely known that Raoul Wallenberg was in contact with German intelligence." Wallenberg was also believed by Sudoplatov's SMERSH source to have been an "established asset" for the American and British intelligence services.

Sudoplatov's speculations on the Wallenberg case appear in his book Special Tasks, which he is reported to have written several years before his death.43 But that book was subjected to devastating criticism. The attacks focused principally on the author's allegations that leading American scientists in the atomic bomb project, Robert Oppenheimer, Leo Szilard, and Enrico Fermi, as well as the distinguished Danish physicist Niels Bohr, had all supplied Soviet agents with "the most vital information for developing the first Soviet atomic bomb…." A top level authority on atomic espionage, Thomas Powers, reviewed the book and found the sensational charges lacking "supporting details" and in the few cases when "details are cited, they are irrelevant or blatantly wrong."44 The book's allegations were found "to evaporate on scrutiny." In general, Sudoplatov's work "is an unrelieved mess-contradictory, often incoherent, riddled with error, unsupported in its major claims."

Powers was not the only expert who trashed the book. America's preeminent authority on the Soviet Union, George Kennan, said it was "marked by extreme vagueness."45 Another leading scholar on Soviet affairs, Walter Laqueur, dismissed most of the claims of Special Tasks, saying the adage Let the Buyer Beware "should be printed in giant lettering on the cover of this book."46 More recently, the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars carried a detailed review of the Sudoplatov book on its Website calling it a "mishmash of absurdities."47

As for Sudoplatov's chapter on Wallenberg, it was not drawn from firsthand knowledge or firsthand sources; he acknowledged that his sources were secondhand and that much of his thesis was purely personal speculation. Indeed, he did not hesitate to use the phrase "my speculations" even when making definitive statements on Wallenberg. As for the Smoltsov Memorandum, he swallowed it whole. Even more disturbing was his contention that at the time of Wallenberg's arrest in Budapest, the Swedish diplomat was "deeply involved in the evacuation of Jews from Germany and Hungary to Palestine." The statement has no basis in fact and reflects extraordinary ignorance.

It is significant that when Special Tasks was first published, Professor Marvin Makinen, a key consultant to the Swedish-Russian Working Group, sought an interview with Sudoplatov but was refused. For all his inadequacy as a source, Sudoplatov echoed the thinking of numerous officials in Moscow's intelligence apparatus. The Swedish report concluded that:

The Russians were convinced in 1945 that Raoul Wallenberg had undercover assignments, at all events ran errands for the Germans and, they strongly suspected, cooperated with American intelligence as well. The Russians were certainly convinced that the Jewish rescue action was only a cover for espionage.48 It certainly required a distorted mindset to believe that Wallenberg served simultaneously as an agent of the Nazis and the Americans, then at war with each other. Besides, a cool, rational assessment of the subject would indicate these suspicions had not a scintilla of evidence in support of them. But, as the Swedish report noted, Stalin "suffered from spy-mania."

The Swedish Report on Prisoner Exchange

If suspected espionage had been the principal Soviet concern, what emerged as extremely "perplexing," in the words of the report, was how infrequently the Soviets interrogated Wallenberg.49 Inquiry by the Swedish analysts cast strong doubts about alleged espionage being the Soviets' primary motivation. Drawing upon Soviet interrogation reports, the Swedish group found that Wallenberg was "seldom questioned." Indeed, it was only after he was imprisoned in Moscow that he was subjected to a "fairly lengthy session." After that, and until March 1947, Wallenberg was interrogated on a few occasions only, and most were of a brief nature; only one lasted as long as two hours. If espionage had been the Kremlin's primary concern, their interrogation, it would seem, would have been persistent and far more intense. After all, they were renowned for their expertise in the gentle science of extracting information.

After surveying the mass of documentary reports at its disposal and conducting innumerable interviews, it was the view of the Swedish group that "the main purpose" for Wallenberg's detention and arrest "may have been to use him in an exchange, as happened with the Swiss [Feller and Meier]…."50 It will be recalled that Bulganin, in his orders to arrest Feller and Meier, specified that the process was to be similar to the one taken with respect to Wallenberg. Feller, in both his report to Swiss officials and in a conversation with a Swedish diplomat in 1947, indicated that when he had been arrested the Russians told him that the purpose was to have him available for an expected exchange of prisoners.51

Eventually, and after some diplomatic bargaining between Switzerland and the Soviet Union, Moscow did release the two Swiss diplomats in exchange for several Soviet citizens who had been detained by the Bern government. Very recently, on January 8, 2001, the Boston Globe reported that Feller had celebrated his eighty-seventh birthday. He had pursued a successful acting career on the Swiss stage.52 Wallenberg was approximately the same age as Feller when seized.

The Swedish group stressed that "a priority of Soviet foreign policy at the end of the war and the following years" was to repatriate Soviet citizens.53 At the top of Moscow's objectives was the return of several Soviet citizens, along with deserters from Russian ships and from some Soviet military units, particularly in the Baltic region. Their presence in Sweden in the late stages of World War II was the subject of constant diplomatic queries to Stockholm by Moscow. This became especially apparent when Sweden would raise the Wallenberg case with Soviet authorities. It came up as early as January 1945 in communications between the Soviet deputy foreign minister and the Swedish ambassador and at various times in 1946 at diplomatic discussions at very high levels. The discussions necessarily were carried on in the traditional indirect manner but, as noted in the January 12 Swedish report, "the Swedish side chose not to understand."54 It helped doom Wallenberg to the Gulag, unlike his luckier Swiss colleagues.

Far less informative, detailed, and analytical than the Swedish report was the one prepared by the Russian group. With some exceptions, it was little more than a summary of information previously provided by Moscow, and its substance, therefore, was old hat to those familiar with the Wallenberg case. Characteristic of the report's disingenuousness was its comment about the Smoltsov Memorandum: "In this document, the Soviet leadership first told the truth about the tragic fate of Raoul Wallenberg."55 "Truth"? An amazing assertion after the Yakovlev Commission's revelation of its hoax character.

The Russian Report - Spies, Spies Everywhere

The Russian report's baldly simplistic explanation of Wallenberg's arrest and detention was quite different from the elaborate, frequently nuanced Swedish account. At the outset, the Russian group chose to locate the source of what they portrayed as arguably a tragic misadventure with Wallenberg's strategy of rescuing Jews by providing them protective Swedish passports. The report alleged that "it is possible that he [Wallenberg] was forced to make a number of violations of the directions concerning the procedure for issuing Swedish protective passports."56 The result was that such documents "were also received by some German and Hungarian Nazis.…" The use of the phrase "it is possible" at least admits to uncertainty. Surely Moscow was aware that the exclusive purpose of Wallenberg's use of protective passports was the rescue of Jews from the Nazi murder machine.

Moreover, the Russian report offered no statistical data. Supposing three or four passports did fall into the hands of Nazis-is this sufficient to question Wallenberg's intentions given his rescue of thousands of Jews? The report also argued that Wallenberg's "bravado" inevitably aroused suspicion. Despite "fierce fighting" in the streets of Budapest on January 13, Wallenberg set out to meet Soviet military officials without consulting the Swedish legation leadership in Budapest. But the very nature of his rescue project did not require consultation with legation officials. (In any case, the head of the legation was advised of the trip and approved it.)

The Russian group acknowledged Wallenberg's "brave" and "adventurous spirit." Admittedly, such attributes are a testimony to "Wallenberg's character," but the report questioned his judgment "to save the Jews" at a moment when the "political situation" was "complicated" and was unfolding "against a background of a violent battle for the town." Apparently, Wallenberg's personal courage on behalf of Jews made his actions suspicious. Was this an indication of a "socially dangerous" individual?

Not until the middle of the Russian report did it assert its theory for Wallenberg's and Langfelder's arrests. As in the Swedish report, it claimed these actions "arose from the suspicion that Wallenberg was involved in spying and his connections with the USA and German secret service."57 The allegation was buttressed by the assertion that "the diplomat issued Swedish 'protective documents' to people who were engaged in hostile activities against the USSR."

But besides its patent illogic, no substantive documentation exists for the allegations about Wallenberg spying for and connections with the U.S. and German secret services. Indeed, the Russian report carried this striking comment, one that can be read as a virtual disclaimer of their own brief: "… some original documents, stating the reasons for Wallenberg's arrest, could not be found in the Russian archives."58 Yet, despite making this shattering concession, the Russian report contended that, in the view of a Swedish coworker of Wallenberg, Lars Berg, the "suspicious attitude of the Soviet military powers to the activities of the Swedish legation and above all Wallenberg was, to a certain extent, well-founded." No direct quotation from Berg was offered and no source was cited for what appears to be a highly questionable, not to mention convenient, attribution.

The report then pursued the more general thesis that "the expansive nature" of Wallenberg's "personal connections" with unnamed counterintelligence and intelligence agencies in Germany and with the War Refugee Board "could give grounds for the Soviet military authorities to suspect Wallenberg of spying

on behalf of Germany or the U.S.A." The conjectural phrase "could give grounds" falls far short of a concrete or precise image of the past, especially in the admitted absence of documentation.

Significantly, the Russian report provided no reference to Sudoplatov, who had been puzzlingly cited by the Swedish group in support of allegations about Wallenberg. On the contrary: examination of Sudoplatov archival items by Russian officials and an interview with him produced "no information" at all.59

The Russian report was startlingly unconvincing because it presented no other reason for the detention and arrest of Wallenberg apart from the suspicion of espionage and the conjectured handing out of some protection passports to German and Hungarian Nazis. Both charges were vaguely presented and lacked substantiation. But then the vagueness was perhaps inevitable as, presumably, no documentation had been found to sustain the theory. Other proposed avenues for investigation were not pursued. In contrast, the more expansive Swedish research group made a credible case that Wallenberg might have been detained for leverage in prisoner exchanges, the use to which the detained Swiss diplomats were put. Why not Wallenberg as well?

The Fiasco of Sweden's Ambassador in the USSR

If a probable motive for seizing Wallenberg were indeed his potential value in exchange for Soviet prisoners in Sweden or escapees sought by Moscow, then diplomatic efforts on his behalf should ineluctably have assumed the greatest importance. In this respect, the role of Sweden's ambassador in Moscow at the time, a certain Staffan Söderblom, was critical. The details of his record, as revealed in the Swedish report, suggest that his attitude toward Wallenberg's situation and his own conduct in the case were both appalling. Students of diplomatic history are certain to find the story not merely curious in the extreme, but bordering on the inconceivable. It must be continually borne in mind that the prisoner in question was the extraordinary hero of the Holocaust, one of the moral giants of our era, not some inconsequential detainee. Nor does the ambassador alone merit scathing criticism; on the contrary, it must be extended to his superiors in the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

It is a matter of record that then U.S. ambassador to the USSR, Averell Harriman, offered Söderblom American assistance in connection with the Wallenberg case on April 12, 1945, as he had been instructed to do.60 The Swedish ambassador turned down Harriman's offer, but in his report to Stockholm on April 19 failed even to mention the U.S. approach. Instead, he told the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that day: "I am afraid that with the best will in the world, the Russians are unable to shed any light on what happened…." He went on to say that it is "possible that Raoul Wallenberg has been killed in some kind of car accident or murdered … in fact he has disappeared without a trace."61 He must surely have been aware of Soviet deputy foreign minister Vladimir Dekanosov's communication of January 16, 1945, only three months earlier, noting that Wallenberg was in the hands of the Soviet authorities and was being well protected.

On April 21, the Swedish Foreign Ministry communicated with Söderblom: "You are hereby firmly instructed to call on Dekanozov." Three days later, the Swedish ambassador did. However, an internal Soviet memorandum recorded that, as Söderblom handed over the communication to Dekanosov, he commented: "It is possible that he [Raoul Wallenberg] has been in some kind of accident." The belief that Wallenberg had been the victim of a fatal accident had become a fixation with the Swedish ambassador. According to the Russian group report, Söderblom, on May 18, again asked for clarification of Wallenberg's status, again expressing his view that "the diplomat had died in a car accident."62

Six months later, on December 26, 1945, he met with a key Soviet Foreign Ministry official, and, according to the latter's notes, said: "I would genuinely like to give you my personal opinion on this

matter [of Wallenberg]. I know of course that my opinion cannot be of a personal nature, but in this case, I would like you to consider it as personal. I take it that Wallenberg is not alive. It is possible that he died in a German air raid or in an attack by some Hungarian or German military unit…."63 Söderblom's next remarks provide an insight into his fixated conviction about Wallenberg's presumed death: "It would be splendid if the [Swedish] mission were to be given a reply … [along lines] that Wallenberg is dead. It is necessary first and foremost because of Wallenberg's mother, who is still hoping her son is alive. She is wasting her strength and health on a further search."

Söderblom's comments to the Soviet officials were not included in his report on the meeting to Stockholm. Such neglect and his disregard of diplomatic protocol by offering a "personal opinion" on a matter of life-and-death are bloodcurdling. The Russian group, in its report, severely chastised Söderblom's references to his "personal opinion" as inevitably confusing. It must have been a "strange code," the Russians noted; diplomats were not permitted to express such "opinions" unless the country's leader wanted them expressed in that way.64 At best, the phrase contributed to "complicating the situation."

The climactic moment for Söderblom's employment of his "personal opinion" was yet to come. He had been angling for a meeting with the Soviet vozhd-Stalin himself-the rarest of privileges extended to a foreign diplomat, one granted only to a handful. On June 8, 1946, the ambassador met with Foreign Minister Molotov to finalize arrangements for the meeting. According to the Swedish group's report, Söderblom intended to point out "the excellence of Swedish-Soviet relations"; clearly, he sought to avoid any challenge to the Soviet Union or to raise any subject that might cause embarrassment.

The Swedish ambassador was ushered into Stalin's presence on June 15, 1946.65 At that meeting, once again, he expressed his "personal opinion" that Wallenberg had been the victim of an accident or had been kidnapped. Stalin then asked: "Did you not receive a message from us?" The reference was most probably to Dekanosov's communication regarding Wallenberg or the similar message delivered by the Soviet ambassador to Sweden, Aleksandra Kollontai. Söderblom responded in the negative, but then went on to say that he very much wished to receive an official statement from the Kremlin indicating that no stone was being left unturned to find Wallenberg. He again told Stalin that, in his view, Wallenberg had died in Hungary. As in previous discussions with Soviet officials, the ambassador was principally concerned with promoting friendly Swedish-Soviet relations and, thereby, his personal status.66

The Swedish report noted that "the Russians were very likely perplexed by Söderblom's behavior." The Russian report was more pointed. "The interview most likely caused Stalin some bewilderment, and possibly even irritation-not one major issue was raised."67 Surely Stalin would have been bewildered and confused were he to have imagined that he might do business with this one-note diplomat. Obviously, the ambassador did not get the meaning of Stalin's query as to whether he had not "received a message."

But the Soviets could be more concrete. In April 1946 an official of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, in a discussion with Söderblom, linked Moscow's "search for Wallenberg" with a demand for the return of a female defector in Stockholm. At a prime minister-level discussion in the autumn of the same year, the Soviet side again pressed hard for the return of defectors, suggesting that Stockholm's failure to respond might endanger Swedish-Soviet relations.

Later, in December, a discussion between the chargé d'affaires of the Swedish embassy in Moscow and a key official of the Soviet Foreign Ministry produced a strong attack upon Sweden for not returning Soviet defectors. This failure was cited as "the problem" most injurious to Swedish-Soviet relations. The Swedish chargé, according to the current Swedish report, "interpreted this as if the Wallenberg case was

being used as some kind of basis for negotiation."68 The Swedish foreign minister, Östen Undén, was in favor of handing over one defector-a major KGB official-but not in exchange for Wallenberg. And when the foreign minister met with Molotov in New York in November 1946, he also never raised the question of Wallenberg's fate, a stunning example of indifference at Stockholm's highest policy level.

What is especially "remarkable," to use the language of the current Swedish report, was Söderblom's "passivity" with regard to Wallenberg and his conduct in meetings with Soviet officials. These features of his diplomacy have raised "a question mark" about his political judgment,69 and it is perhaps pertinent that only six years after his meeting with Stalin, his mental health had so "deteriorated" that, at age fifty-one, he was forced to leave the Sweden's Foreign Ministry. Even if mental health problems were not in evidence earlier, his strange conduct should have alerted Foreign Ministry officials in Stockholm.

What a monumental tragedy! How Kafkaesque as well! Arguably the most important diplomat in the Swedish Foreign Ministry handling the Wallenberg case was a blundering fool, and possibly a psychologically damaged one to boot, incapable of appropriate action at the time when the survival of Sweden's greatest moral figure of the Holocaust was at stake.

The Swedish Foreign Ministry's "Strange" Passivity

But the Swedish report went well beyond targeting one individual. If the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was aware of Söderblom's passivity, there is no evidence that he was "admonished" for it by his superiors or by the ministry's top officials. The report called such an inexplicable lapse "strange," and it pondered the lack of accountability. The Russian group's report was equally critical of the conduct of Sweden's Foreign Ministry. In the ministry's relationship with Moscow, the Russian group noted, the resolution of the Wallenberg case was simply not a high priority.70 Indeed, "the main topic of discussion" between Stockholm and Moscow concerned "the trade agreement and credit." The only other topic that had arisen, according to the Russian report, was "the persistent refusal of the Swedish side to extradite war criminals," the Soviet term for defectors from its military.

According to the Russian report, the Wallenberg case was treated as a very minor matter. It noted that at a time "when a thousand people were sitting in Soviet prisons" (obviously an understatement) the fate of Wallenberg was by no means "major" and was handled as an "ordinary" matter. The implication of the report is clear: had the Swedes given the issue higher priority and used Wallenberg as a bargaining chip in either trade issues or prisoner exchange, the outcome would have been very different.

The Swedish Foreign Ministry's irresolute treatment of the Wallenberg case was again touched on in the Russian report when it took note of a meeting at the UN of Undén and Molotov in November 1946. When they congratulated each other on the completion of a trade agreement, nothing was said about Wallenberg. It was "as if," the Russian group's report sarcastically noted, "the Wallenberg issue did not exist in Soviet-Swedish relations...."

Illuminating the personal dimension-as well as judicial significance-of Sweden's neglect of the Wallenberg case was an exchange between Wallenberg and his interrogator in March 1947, as reported by Wallenberg to a fellow prisoner who was interviewed by Swedish officials much later.71 Wallenberg asked his interrogator to put him in direct touch with the Swedish legation in Moscow or with the Red Cross. The interrogator refused, saying that "nobody takes any notice of you. If the Swedish Government or its mission [in Moscow] had been at all interested in you, they would have been in touch a long time ago." The Swedish group correctly observed that this was "a devastating comment" on Sweden's lack of diplomatic "commitment." It is painful to contemplate the impact the interrogator's comment likely had on Wallenberg's morale.

In stark contrast to the Swedish government's failure to make use of the leverage it possessed for obtaining Wallenberg's release, including prisoner exchange, was the way the predicament of Soviet detainees was handled by other countries. Switzerland, Italy, and Denmark successfully arranged such exchanges with Moscow. Thus the Swiss diplomats Feller and Meier-who Stalin signaled were to be detained in the same way as Wallenberg-were, in fact, exchanged. Sweden eventually returned Russian spies without asking for anything in return. In this connection, a Swedish foreign official and former close colleague of Wallenberg, Per Anger, asked Foreign Minister Östen Undén to offer to exchange captured Russian spies for Wallenberg. The foreign minister's answer was memorably duplicitous: "The Swedish government does not do such things."

A striking, if not surprising, commentary on Undén's views on Wallenberg was presented by his closest friend in the Swedish cabinet, Ulla Lindström, in her diary entry of April 1, 1956. Undén believed, she wrote, that "the Russians really do not know" what happened to Wallenberg and that he "probably died in the chaotic conditions" in Budapest. Had Wallenberg been found, he thought, the Russians would have had good "reason to return him to Sweden…." With oddly distorted views like these, what could be expected from the Stockholm Foreign Ministry?72

Anger's question was posed at a time when Sweden had considerable leverage with the Soviets. During 1946, Stockholm had given the USSR a billion crowns in credit as part of trade negotiations. In terms of realpolitik, Sweden's conduct during the early years of Wallenberg's incarceration is incomprehensible and, in moral terms, appalling. Even as it failed to make use of the diplomatic muscle it possessed, the Swedes also refused America's offers to help. Anger noted that the American embassy in Moscow had shown "great interest in the Wallenberg case as early as 1945" but the Swedes "never followed up on this." For the Swedish diplomat, this was an "example of the paralysis that characterized Swedish behavior...."73

Nor does it appear that the Swedish government made any effort to arouse world public opinion. A survey of New York Times coverage during 1945-47 and extending all the way to 1952 shows not a single story devoted to the Wallenberg case or even referring to the heroic rescuer of Jews. Of course, the failure of the United States to raise the case independently with Moscow, even though Wallenberg was in the employ of the United States while serving in the Swedish legation in Budapest, also helped keep the issue from the media or the court of public opinion.74

What Happened to Wallenberg? Moscow's Thesis

If, then, a highly practicable means of securing Wallenberg's release-an exchange of prisoners-could not be or was not acted upon, what follows from this? The answer is inextricably connected with the fundamental question that stands at the heart of the Wallenberg mystery: what happened to the man? This question has been asked for over a half century, and answering it was the primary reason for forming the Swedish-Russian Working Group. As with the initial question of the reason behind Wallenberg's detention, the Russian group and the Swedish group came to different conclusions.

For the Russian group, the infamous Smoltsov Memorandum remained canonical. It was the "truth": Wallenberg had died of a heart attack on July 17, 1947 while in Lubyanka. But the group's report on how this ending came about is revealing and strongly suggests that more than mere natural causes was responsible.

Once the trade agreement had been reached and the Wallenberg issue "was not generally mentioned" in formal discussions at the level of the respective foreign ministries, "it was evidently decided that the time had come to put a full stop to the Wallenberg affair," which was still receiving attention in the Swedish press and parliament. At this moment in time, "the final fatal decision for Wallenberg was also taken."75 The inference of the Russian group's comment was clear: some form of intervention by the

security and political apparatus was certain.

What followed in the Russian report was the well-known memorandum from Vyshinsky to Molotov, dated May 14, 1947, asking the latter to have Abakumov submit a "proposal" for the "elimination" of the Wallenberg case.76 Several days later, Molotov sent a copy to Abakumov asking him to follow through and "inform me." On July 7, 1947, Vyshinsky personally wrote to Abakumov suggesting how the top security official could seek out damaging information about Wallenberg that might be used in the former's responses to official Swedish inquiries. The information would cover where Wallenberg was in Budapest during battles or bomb attacks. The obvious inference to be taken is that he was seeking an answer that might help him convince the Swedes that Wallenberg had been killed in Budapest.

The climactic date came ten days later. On July 17, 1947, Abakumov wrote to Molotov in response to the latter's request of May 18 seeking clarification on how he planned the resolution of the irritating Wallenberg problem. Even though the letter is listed in the secretariat register of documents for both the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is missing from both archives. It was obviously a decisive and revealing document. On exactly the same date, the Smoltsov Memorandum was supposedly penned; the coincidence of the dates could not have "happened by chance," observed the Russian group.77

Precisely one month later, on August 18, fully cognizant of the July 17 developments, Vyshinsky unabashedly told the Swedes that "Wallenberg is not in the Soviet Union and is unknown to us." He added that the Swedish diplomat might have been killed during the fighting in Budapest. This bald-faced lie caused considerable embarrassment in the mid-fifties when the release of prisoners of war between the Federal Republic of Germany and the USSR produced a crop of witnesses with direct knowledge of Wallenberg. They had either sat in the same cell as Wallenberg (or his driver), or had heard about him from other prisoners, or had received information directly from his wall-tapping messages at various prisons.

Months of confused and contradictory official Soviet internal draft explanations followed, and Stockholm angrily complained that new evidence from the released prisoners made a mockery of Vyshinsky's denial. Sworn evidence provided Swedish supreme court justices pointedly demonstrated that, for at least two years, Wallenberg had been incarcerated and isolated. Shabby internal maneuvering over a long period in the mid-fifties eventually produced the Smoltsov Memorandum, which Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko delivered to Stockholm on February 6, 1957.

Yet, for the Russian group, in its January 12, 2001, report, the memorandum remained a credible document. But the Russian group did hint that Wallenberg's alleged death might have been caused by active state intervention, and not naturally by a heart attack. How that may have happened was not discussed; instead, the report gave emphasis to the testimony of Wallenberg cellmates who disclosed that after the July 17 event-whatever it was-they were harshly reminded by security officials to forget everything they might have seen. The report was fascinating in its discussion of how the security personnel operated:

When one of them [the cellmates] mentioned Wallenberg in the course of the interrogation, the conversation immediately became concentrated around his name. Then they all simultaneously were thrown into a prison cell, in order to be able "to have a good think" about what they ought to know and what they should forget.78

This conduct, noted the report, was "very likely … the first attempt of the national security bodies to cover up the crime." By the end of the Russian group's report, it was apparent that its members had accepted the notion that some "crime" had been committed on July 17. One of the closest cellmates of

Wallenberg, the group's report caustically observed, died shortly afterward from "paralysis of the heart" while being transferred to another camp in the Gulag. "It is unlikely to be an accident," was the group's comment.

Execution: A New Russian Line

The Russian group also received a report by three former leading KGB officials claiming they had information that Wallenberg had been executed in 1947 for spying for Germany. The treatment of these allegations by the Russian group was sketchy in the extreme. No details were offered. Equally unsupported was an additional disclosure by a group member who reported that in an interview with two former KGB officials in 1991 he was provided exactly the same account but that "the majority of the documents relating to this matter were then destroyed." What about the remaining documents? Nothing was said on this subject.

While the Russian report took cognizance of the view in various circles that Wallenberg remained alive after 1947, it was brushed off with a contemptuous comment that "the number of people who have 'apparently' seen the Swedish diplomat or heard some information about him has grown."79 Elsewhere in its report, the group vehemently argued that "none" of the sources "has produced reliable and convincing evidence for Raoul Wallenberg having been alive after July 1947."80

The absence of solid documentation of his continued survival, from the group's perspective, justified its categorical denial that he remained alive after 1947 and its insistence that he died in July 1947. But predicating the argument on the absence of solid documentation could lead to the opposite conclusion; there was, after all, no clear-cut evidence for his alleged death in July 1947.

Precisely because of the absence of such documentary proof the Russians clung desperately to the hoax of the Smoltsov Memorandum. Remarkably, several pages of the group's report argued for its validity. Only toward the end did the group speculate that the memorandum might have been inaccurate.81 But the group insisted on the essential "truth" of the memorandum and the absolute certainty of Wallenberg's death in 1947. The reason for its desperate clinging to the memorandum is self-evident: no other document "proving" his death existed.

Even before the release of the Russian report, one of the group's members was publicly expounding the theme of Wallenberg's death in 1947 as an execution. Vladimir Vinogradov, the deputy chief archivist of the Russian Federal Security Bureau (formerly the KGB), gave an interview to a journalist for various Scandinavian press organs that was then carried in a St. Petersburg newspaper on September 21, 2000. He openly declared that Wallenberg had been "executed" in Lubyanka prison by "shooting" for "spying."82 No details as to date, time, persons involved, type of weapon, or any other information were given. Instead, Vinogradov asserted that the appropriate documents were "destroyed," and he failed to disclose the basis of his assertion.

Vinogradov, a colonel in the domestic security services (FSB), returned to the Wallenberg mystery a week after the January 12 press conference and the release of the official studies, but this time more cautiously. On January 16, 2001, he held a press conference in Moscow in which he avoided characterizing Wallenberg's death as an "execution" or "shooting." Now, he restricted himself to saying that the Swede had suffered a "violent death"83 but offered no details.

His only "conclusive evidence" was that after July 17, 1947, "the name of Wallenberg no longer figures in the register of movements within Lefortovo prison." (He may have meant Lubyanka prison.) "This suggests," he said, "that he [Wallenberg] died a violent death." Vinogradov's new reasoning was pure speculation; he actually acknowledged he had no documentary evidence. The only basis for his thesis was the reported testimony of three former KGB officials that Wallenberg had been tried for espionage

and shot. But in the course of floating his theory, he emptied the so-called evidence of virtually all substance. According to Vinogradov, two of the three unnamed former KGB officials had reached their conclusions "from indirect evidence" whose nature was not disclosed. The third former KGB official was identified only as an interpreter who assisted at one of Wallenberg's interrogations.

Even as Vinogradov played fast and loose with the documentary record and built sheer air castles, he displayed consummate gall in dismissing out of hand all contentions that Wallenberg might have survived after 1947. In an interview on January 17, he insisted that all "eyewitness" accounts about Wallenberg were without foundation and were often offered by mentally unstable persons.84 Departing even further from any standard of human decency, he spoke disdainfully of those who sought to ascertain whether Wallenberg had died of a heart attack or was shot. "Whether he died or was killed was not very important" to "his relatives or himself," he said.

Vinogradov was not alone in making the absurd contention that, while documentary evidence of Wallenberg's death was unnecessary, documentary proof was essential to prove that he might have remained alive after 1947. This ridiculous asymmetry was also articulated in an interview on January 18 by the head of the Russian group, Vyacheslav Tuchnin, who is also the chief of the Swedish and Finnish Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry. "There is no documentary evidence" Wallenberg was "somewhere" after 1947. Only "oral evidence exists," he told a Moscow radio station, and this evidence, he went on, "has not been confirmed."85 While he granted that documentation did not exist for Wallenberg's survival, Tuchnin was nonetheless convinced that the secret police killed Wallenberg and then destroyed the evidence.

Conspicuous by its absence in Tuchnin's account was the date of Wallenberg's death. July 17, 1947, was not mentioned, in contrast to the assertions of Vinogradov. Wallenberg's alleged execution had come to assume a ghostly quality in the Russian account. When Wallenberg was supposed to have died had become as vague as where and how the alleged death had occurred.

The Swedish Report on Wallenberg's Fate: Uncertainty

The Swedish group's report was far more detailed and elaborate, meticulously researched, more nuanced, skeptical, and uncertain in its conclusions regarding Wallenberg's detention. Everyone familiar with the case agreed that 1947 marked a turning point, but different historical participants and historians explained it differently. The failure to elicit a prisoner exchange, an initial motivation for Wallenberg's seizure, could not but prompt thinking in the Kremlin as to what to do with the Swedish prisoner. The indifference and blundering of the Swedish government, of course, were also prime factors in reaching the dangerous impasse.

The Swedish report said nothing about the completion of a major trade agreement with Moscow as a cut-off point-something emphasized by the Russian group-and Swedish neglect of this point is regrettable. Moscow might very well have concluded that Swedish-Soviet differences, including those over Wallenberg, were now behind them. From the spring of 1947, preparation's by the Kremlin to resolve the case were greatly intensified, papers in the archive of the Soviet Foreign Ministry reveal.86 Until then, as noted, Wallenberg was seldom interrogated by security officials, and then for only brief periods. Indeed, a leading interrogator was reported to have told him that he was "a political case, and that he would never be sentenced."87

By May 1947, Vyshinsky was moving to wrap up the case with his confidential communication to Molotov complaining that Sweden had made eight written and five oral approaches since April 1945 concerning Wallenberg, and that the matter had been raised in the Swedish parliament and by the Swedish press. He expressed further irritation with the failure of the Soviet security agencies to respond to repeated requests from his Foreign Ministry for information on the case and how to handle it. In his

memorandum to Molotov, Vyshinsky urged him to order Abakumov to provide a report on the matter as well as offer proposals for "its liquidation." While the Swedish report recognized that the word "liquidation" could be interpreted in two ways, meaning either the killing of Wallenberg or the resolution of the case itself, it nonetheless concluded "it is not very likely that it refers to anything other than the case."88

The Abakumov response took the form of a personal letter to Molotov on July 17 that is registered as No. 3044/a (the registration number was identified by the Foreign Ministry's Scandinavian section head six days later). The Swedish group's report detailed its unsuccessful efforts to find this critically important letter. Former top archivists were engaged, but they reported that it was not to be found in the archives.

That the letter was decisive is self-evident given the sharp interrogation of Wallenberg's cellmates shortly afterward and the subsequent isolation and deaths several months later of a key cellmate and of Wallenberg's driver, Langfelder. The central question is why did the Soviet action assume a decisive character? Why couldn't Moscow acknowledge Wallenberg's presence in the USSR instead of duplicitously saying that he was unknown, as in Vyshinsky's letter of August 18, 1947, and then return him to Sweden, even absent an exchange?

The answers offered in the Swedish report were frequently suggestive and often useful, if not always entirely accurate. First, the report argued, "this was the period when Stalin intensified his anti-Semitic campaign" and, therefore, had no time for Wallenberg and his pro-Jewish humanitarian efforts. In fact, Stalin's anti-Semitic campaign did not emerge until late 1948. (Early in January 1948, the Kremlin secretly arranged the murder of the Jewish community's leader, Solomon Mikhoels, but to avoid any indication of its responsibility, it actually staged a large-scale public funeral for him.) As recently as 1947, Jewish journals and publications flourished, including the famed Yiddish theater. In the Middle East, the Soviet Union proved to be a vigorous supporter of a budding Jewish state in Palestine.

A second reason, the report stated, was Moscow's disappointment with Sweden's failure to respond positively to the signals sent by the Soviets for a prisoner exchange. It might have seemed to the Kremlin that "Sweden acted to some degree as if Raoul Wallenberg's release was not desirable."89

The third reason was the most plausible: it would have proved "highly embarrassing to tell the Swedes … that, yes, Raoul Wallenberg had been in one of our prisons all along." Moreover, what Wallenberg could report about the Gulag could be "extremely revealing"-that is, damaging to the public image of the Soviet Union.

In this connection, Raoul Wallenberg's courage and integrity should be noted. According to reports of his fellow prisoners, he showed no signs of wishing to cooperate with his jailers and refused to say anything when interrogated, referring repeatedly to his diplomatic status.

What, then, happened to Wallenberg in July 1947? The Swedish report proposed two principal alternative hypotheses with "the uncertainty factor" in choosing between them being "very high."90 The first hypothesis was that he died "in all probability of unnatural causes." If the Smoltsov Memorandum, which referred to a probable heart attack, was likely specious, the report was prepared to consider "outright execution" or "harsh treatment" or the possibility that "something went wrong."

The Swedish report dissected the Smoltsov document and found it seriously wanting. This conclusion relied heavily upon "an exhaustive analysis" prepared by one of the consultants to the Swedish-Russian Working Group, Susan Mesinai,91 that detailed the document's numerous shortcomings. In addition, other prisoners had reported Wallenberg to have been in good health and, at least until March, well

treated. In light of revelations about Smoltsov's retirement in March 1947, it was appropriate to cite the results of an interview with Smoltsov's son by an unnamed member of the Russian group included in the Swedish report.

The twenty-three-year-old son, in 1947, working at the time for the security services, stated "that his father was unexpectedly called to his work on an evening in July 1947."92 The Swedish report, drawing upon the interview, then continued:

This was unusual considering that he suffered from heart disease, did not therefore work full-time and was preparing to be discharged. His father did not return until the following morning and then said that a Swede [unnamed] had died in the inner prison [of Lubyanka]. Even while making these assertions, Smoltsov's son refused to be interviewed by the Swedish group on the grounds that he had no further details to offer. The Yakovlev Commission was to discover that his comments were nothing other than a fabrication, his father having fully retired four months before the infamous memorandum was presumably written.

Other mysteries associated with 1947 compounded the Wallenberg problem. A ledger that listed the prisoners' belongings and valuables carried a note concerning Wallenberg with his name blotted out and then restored. The ledger listed the belongings that accompanied him when he was transferred from Lefortovo to Lubyanka in February-March 1947. Information about what happened to him and these items after that date was left empty, a gap the Swedish report characterized as "unique." The list accounted for the belongings of all the other prisoners.93

Some presentations made orally to the Swedish group offered other explanations for Wallenberg's supposed death in 1947. A former official in the Soviet Foreign Ministry (now deceased) who had closely followed the Wallenberg case since 1946 surmised that he had succumbed to hardship and inhumane treatment, both of a physical and mental nature. An older security official, already high ranking in 1946-47, believed that Wallenberg died on July 17, 1947 as a result of some kind of accident.94 Neither official offered any substantiation.

Yakovlev, Kryuchkov, and Missing Documents

Anticipating (or reflecting) the Yakovlev Commission report of December 6, 2000, the following statement appeared near the end of the Swedish report: "The most common theory about Raoul Wallenberg's fate is that he was shot."95 The principal source for this view was given as the same

Aleksandr Yakovlev, chairman of the Rehabilitation Commission, although he was not identified by that title. He was reported to have spoken with Vladimir Kryuchkov, the KGB chief, at a Politburo meeting held in the autumn of 1989. What prompted that discussion was the disclosure to the Politburo of the sudden discovery of some of Wallenberg's belongings. Discussion in the party leadership centered on whether or not to return the items to Wallenberg's family, then about to visit Moscow or already visiting it.

All three of Yakovlev's curious statements were dutifully cited in the Swedish group's report. Was there no surprise at the convenient "discovery" of the Wallenberg items precisely at that time, especially since the various items were ordinarily catalogued and stored separately? Was this the first time that Yakovlev had heard references to the Wallenberg case during the era of glasnost? No answers were provided. Instead, Yakovlev reported that, at the Politburo meeting, Kryuchkov affirmed the official canonical Kremlin view that the 1957 Soviet version of the case-with the Smoltsov Memorandum as its centerpiece-was correct.

Despite Kryuchkov's repetition of the classic formulation, Yakovlev gained a different impression about the thinking of other Politburo members about the Smoltsov Memorandum; they seemed to doubt its validity. When the Politburo meeting concluded, Yakovlev said he had a brief private encounter with Kryuchkov and asked "straight out" what had happened to Wallenberg. The KGB boss replied directly that Wallenberg was shot in 1947-but he provided no specific date and noted that there was no documentation of the execution.

Assuming that the version contained in the Swedish report is accurate, it is exceedingly puzzling why Yakovlev said nothing about Kryuchkov's apparently definitive account until the year 2000. Certainly, he was aware of the Swedish-Russian Working Group's existence since spring 1991. Why was he silent? Did he himself seek to ascertain more? If not, why not? Was the ideological leader of glasnost totally indifferent to the Wallenberg case? A host of related questions arise: Did he seek to learn all the details available about the shooting from the KGB chief? If not, why not? As for the Swedish group members, did they pose these questions to Yakovlev? If so, what was his response? And if they did not pose the questions, what was their explanation?

Even before the group issued its report, Yakovlev blew the lid off the legitimacy of the Smoltsov Memorandum and publicly announced that Wallenberg had been shot. But simultaneously with his final undermining of the credibility of the Smoltsov Memorandum, Yakovlev could not but raise questions about his own failure to provide any details about Wallenberg's execution.

Yakovlev was not the only senior Russian official cited in the Swedish report as maintaining that Wallenberg had been executed. Other KGB officials, including its top-level analyst, Sergei Kondrashov, who had served in various strategically important positions for the security agency, also subscribed to this opinion. A well-known KGB defector, Oleg Gordievsky, claimed to have heard of Wallenberg's execution as well. As for the less-than-credible Sudoplatov, Wallenberg had been poisoned by the security services.

There was a second hypothesis regarding Wallenberg's fate. It was far more intriguing than the first, if not always easy to substantiate. According to this version of events, Wallenberg had somehow been "hidden away" or isolated, possibly under a concealed identity. A considerable body of evidence had emerged lending credence to this view, and the Swedish group analyzed the evidence in its report.

Speculation supporting the secreting away of Wallenberg came from former KGB sources. According to an official who had worked in the KGB Scandinavian section during the 1950-80 period, a natural death in prison for the young Wallenberg was unlikely. Moreover, the required handling of a prisoner's file in

case of death did not conform to the procedures followed in the Wallenberg case. The standard practice, the KGB agent noted, was for a security official to go through and summarize the dead person's file. No such action was taken here.96

More interesting was a KGB commentary of December 1955 on a KGB letter related to a proposed report to the Communist Party Central Committee about Wallenberg. That commentary was sent to the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Scandinavian Department. While the proposed report to the Central Committee was missing from government files, the December 1955 paper specifically referred to a paragraph in the proposed report that, the KGB believed, required altering. The wording of the proposed report, the commentary suggested, should be modified so that "the absence of information about Wallenberg is explained by his having been in the Soviet Union under a different name from the first postwar days until his death."97 This is a rare reference to Wallenberg having been given a "different name."

That a document should be missing was, by itself, nothing unusual; on the contrary, as the Swedish report indicated, "a great many are missing, particularly from KGB records."98 Also, the report found that "some documents contain a revised version of events." But archival research on Wallenberg reveals that the decisive feature of the documentary record on Wallenberg was an attempt to suppress the truth that runs like a leitmotif through many of the papers. This was especially the case once the decision was taken in 1956 to concoct the Smoltsov Memorandum. All crucial KGB documents disappeared along with the notorious Abakumov letter to Molotov.

The Hypothesis of the Isolation of Wallenberg

If the cover-up of the Wallenberg case was standard procedure, how much more effectively could this be accomplished if he were totally isolated, made to disappear, as it were, with no contacts whatsoever and his name changed to make the isolation complete? Already, on July 22, 1947, former and present cellmates, along with those of Langfelder, were subjected to extraordinary pressures to envelop the Wallenberg name in all-embracing silence. Subsequently, extraordinary precautions were taken to eliminate whatever records could be found regarding his prison stay.

Two alternative sites within the Soviet system of restricted institutions offered maximum isolation: a high-security prison in which the names of inmates are replaced with numbers or a closed psychiatric

institution. Both provided the requisite hermetically sealed environment. The very nature of the total isolation meant that no documentary material on the post-July 1947 period would be located even were the Swedish group to have examined-as it did-25,000 pages of records. Nonetheless, imaginative forms of research could and would prove revealing, providing insights on where Wallenberg might have been hidden and isolated.

Vladimir Prison was an especially enticing place to research as it provided some prisoners, particularly foreign diplomats, with false names as well as numbers. Several of Wallenberg's cellmates were transferred there after sentencing. The prison was also built to maximize an enforced isolation. Most importantly, it was the prison that did, in fact, produce a large number of witnesses who provided oral testimony regarding Wallenberg to foreign governments and organizations.

This testimony, provided by German prisoners freed in 1955-56, prompted Sweden in 1959 to request the USSR to permit a judicial inquiry. Two invited Swedish judges reported in 1960 that "Wallenberg was probably alive and held at Vladimir Prison at least until the early 1950s." At the same time, they acknowledged that "there is no conclusive proof" for this conjecture. Significantly, in 1990, a team of researchers, including a former prisoner at Vladimir in early 1962, Professor Marvin Makinen, now a microbiologist at the University of Chicago, concluded that the information provided them by former prisoners about dates and cellmates covering their own incarcerations were correct. It could be the beginning. The researchers also learned that the Soviet Union had never conducted a thorough investigation to ascertain whether Wallenberg was imprisoned there.

Of particular value was testimony provided in 1993 and later of a Vladimir Prison hospital orderly, Varvara Larina. She was able to identify Wallenberg as having been in a special isolation cell in the mid-1950s. While she did not know his real name-or, for that matter, the real name of any prisoner-or have access to any information about him, she immediately identified his picture from a number of photos shown her. That picture had never been previously published. The only time Larina had any contact with a prisoner was when she occasionally accompanied a medical team into the cells. Yet she was able to provide some fairly accurate physical characteristics, for example, about height and weight. When Professor Makinen interviewed her more recently in the presence of a prison representative, she firmly adhered to her story.99

A former prison guard at Vladimir reported in 1992 that a foreign prisoner, resembling a photo of Wallenberg, was held in an isolated cell for a long time. A half dozen other witnesses, former prisoners, were also listed in the Swedish report, each stating that he had heard about Wallenberg's presence from another prisoner or had been with him on some distinct occasion. (Most of the evidence was indirect; they "heard" about him.) Makinen, himself, while a prisoner in Vladimir, related that he had heard about a Swede in the prison who had appeared to have been arrested for intelligence activities.

Unusually impressive was a research project conducted at the prison by Makinen together with a computer specialist, Ari Kaplan. Over 10,000 prisoner registration cards for the period 1947-72 were computer-processed and analyzed with the focus on the cells the prisoners had occupied. A key question investigated by Makinen and Kaplan was whether seemingly empty cells had indeed been uninhabited. They sought to determine whether an isolated, secret, nameless prisoner could have occupied one of them. The study pointed to the conclusion that such a prisoner could very well have been held there. Oral evidence from other prisoners also tended to support the strong possibility of Wallenberg having been in various isolation cells at intervals extending into the mid-1970s. While absolute evidence of his presence is unavailable, the research results are sufficiently persuasive to warrant continuing investigation. Reported sightings of Wallenberg at other places and at other time also require exploration.

Moscow's Paroxysm about the Svartz Story

The Swedish group report also examined the important question of the comparative credibility of Dr. Nanna Svartz and Professor Aleksandr Miasnikov, a prominent Soviet medical official with whom she had an extremely intriguing conversation about the fate of Wallenberg in 1961.100 According to her testimony, Dr. Svartz was told in confidence by Professor Miasnikov that Wallenberg was in poor physical condition and was being held in a mental hospital. The testimony is important, in the first instance, because it supports the contention that Wallenberg might have been hidden away in a closed psychiatric institution rather than in a special prison, like Vladimir, which contained isolation cells. Miasnikov denied her version. Oddly enough, Svartz's testimony was presented in the Swedish report in a manner that might validate Miasnikov's categorical rejection of her version of the conversation. In other words, it was handled as an indeterminate "she says, he says" controversy. Given the fact that Svartz was a distinguished physician of impeccable character, her testimony is treated with a surprising, almost inexplicable skepticism as if the whole matter were a simple "misunderstanding," as the Soviets chose to portray it.

Also curious is the entire absence from the Swedish group's report of the veritable paroxysm into which the Kremlin was thrown by the Svartz disclosure. The panic was evidenced in top-secret party documents after the Swedish prime minister, Tage Erlander, raised the Svartz reports on March 18, 1964.101 One month later, on April 23, Gromyko wrote to the Central Committee stating that the Soviet Foreign Ministry "would consider it advisable that Professor Miasnikov send through the Swedish embassy in Moscow a letter to Nanna Svartz rejecting as being unfounded the information concerning Wallenberg allegedly received from him." Gromyko went on to say that the KGB boss agreed with him.

Five days later, on April 28, the Praesidium (or Politburo) considered the proposal and, in its "top secret" minutes, instructed Miasnikov to send the proposed letter denying Svartz's report of her conversation with him. The Miasnikov letter was promptly written. At stake, of course, was the very validity of the Smoltsov Memorandum that constituted the core of the Kremlin's repeated refrain that Wallenberg had died of a heart attack in 1947. An arranged confrontation between the two, together with officials of their respective foreign ministries, took place the following year, July 10, 1965. Again Miasnikov rejected Svartz's story, contending that his knowledge of German, in which their conversation had taken place in 1961, was not very good.

The episodes caused acute embarrassment in the Kremlin but, puzzling enough, this was omitted in the Swedish report. It is also surprising that the report did not consider the odd coincidence that, only four months after the confrontation, Miasnikov suddenly died. Svartz wondered aloud whether "it was really a case of natural death."102 Notwithstanding the Swedish report's odd, inadequate treatment of the Svartz episode, it concluded that further investigation was needed to determine whether Wallenberg was placed in a closed psychiatric institution.103

In the last sentence of a chapter titled "Concluding Arguments," the Swedish report was emphatic in placing responsibility for determining the truth about Wallenberg upon Moscow: "The burden of proof regarding the death of Raoul Wallenberg lies with the Russian Government."104 Just prior to making this powerful assertion, the report emphasized that, thus far, no "credible death certificate" had been produced and, besides, testimony of his "being alive cannot be dismissed."

Having located responsibility where it belonged, the Swedish group urged that "the door must be kept open for new discoveries in the archives." But the Russian group took the opposite line. It considered Wallenberg's alleged death in 1947 to be "the unambiguous ending to the story." It also concluded that the task faced by the the Swedish-Russian Working Group had been "resolved." In contrast, the Swedish group pointed to a number of files, particularly those of Wallenberg's fellow prisoners, that had not been available to researchers. Especially infuriating had been the refusal of Moscow's foreign intelligence service-SVR-to make available files on pertinent individuals.

That Moscow has constituted a formidable barrier to discovering the truth about Wallenberg's fate is news to no one. Among other obstacles erected by the Kremlin, many investigators have bemoaned its dilatory, evasive, and occasionally outright duplicitous tactics. While working in Moscow in 1997-98, a Canadian learned that "the Russian side was … lethargic in answering requests for information."105 He added that "only after lengthy delays" was information provided and access to archives finally granted. In a detailed Chronology of events prepared recently by the Raoul Wallenberg Committee of the United States, this activist NGO found that, as of November 2000, "approximately one half of the questions and requests for information communicated to the Russians still remain unanswered or only partially answered."106

Specialists on the KGB find this phenomenon familiar.107 One Russian journalist seeking information from Russian foreign intelligence archives ran into numerous "man-made obstacles" including repeated long delays in getting permission from the authorities. With specific reference to the Wallenberg case, prevarication was a typical response by top archival officials. The manner by which the Russians released piecemeal information over time on Wallenberg was "a kind of obscene dance of the seven veils," according to a British historian.

Isolated or Numbered Prisoners

The first study in the Reports by the Independent Consultants, by Susan Mesinai, was a detailed, critical examination of Soviet laws, rules, and regulations. In her view, the suggestion that total arbitrariness governed the Stalinist system was erroneous since this system was characterized by a "thoroughness of Soviet accounting," particularly as applied to the "counting, grouping and categorization of prisoners." The aim, she stressed, was to maintain a "close watch" for both totalitarian and utilitarian purposes.108 What emerges from her inquiry are a series of questions that challenge the thesis that Wallenberg died or was killed in 1947.

In the first instance, Mesinai closely examined and severely chastised the Smoltsov Memorandum.109 As for the credibility of the thesis that Wallenberg was executed, Mesinai's research led to the conclusion that such an act would have necessitated an orderly and premeditated legal and bureaucratic process. The decision to execute Wallenberg would have required a sentence by a military tribunal or deliberations at the highest level of Soviet leadership followed by a decision, then an order, accompanied by a witnessed document to affirm that the execution had been carried out.

No documentary evidence for such an execution, she noted, had thus far been discovered. Even more devastating to this thesis was the fact that "death by shooting" (rasstriel) was officially "cancelled May 26, 1947 and not resumed until January 12, 1950."110 How could one explain, then, the argument that Wallenberg was presumably shot on July 17, 1947 or, for that matter, anytime in July 1947? She cited a former KGB official, Ilya Dzhikvelov, who repeatedly made the point that "liquidation" or assassination was "carried out in strict accordance with laws that are still in force."

An additional source for the argument that a set of documents was required in the event of an execution, she noted, was the great physicist and humanist, Andrei Sakharov. In his Memoirs, he wrote: "If a person had been executed, an affidavit that the death sentence had been carried out was included [in the person's file] with a record of the serial number of the pistol used."111 Sakharov learned this information from a key KGB officer when the physicist worked on a top-secret nuclear project. Sakharov also learned that all NKVD and KGB investigative files were stamped: "To be preserved forever." Was it conceivable that all the Wallenberg documents and files were missing? Significantly, while Yakovlev considered himself a friend of Sakharov's, he continues to maintain that Wallenberg was shot in July 1947. How would he explain Sakharov's firm views in his Memoirs? Yakovlev never addressed this question.

If Wallenberg had indeed been executed, there would be the related matter of burial or cremation. The authorities of the Domskoi Crematorium stated in 1991 that his name did not appear on its list of cremations carried out in 1947. There is the possibility, Mesinai pointed out, that the bodies of the executed could be disposed of without recording their names at Domskoi. But, she stressed, solid information could be deduced if researchers were provided a list of prisoners in the Prison Administration who did die; these could be compared with a list of executions.

Still another source of doubts about an arbitrary execution was a top KGB official in charge of counterintelligence in 1947, Gen. Yevgeni Pitovranov. In 1992 he was interviewed on Swedish television and, according to Mesinai, declared: "Joseph Stalin needed him [Wallenberg] in the big political game and would never have executed him…. His death was a mistake."112 Shooting was a

deliberate, conscious act, not the result of a "mistake." No one, Mesinai observed, had been held accountable for this "mistake." And researchers have thrown no further light on this matter.

The principal evidence cited in support of the contention that Wallenberg was executed is the infamous memorandum of Vyshinsky to Molotov in May 1947 that called for the "liquidation" of the irritating Wallenberg problem, and that some have interpreted as the "liquidation" of Wallenberg himself. Mesinai, like the members of the Swedish joint working group, contended that the term "liquidation" referred to the case, not the individual. The absence of any documentation of Wallenberg's death by heart attack or by shooting strongly suggested to her the likelihood of Wallenberg's being transformed into a numbered, nameless prisoner.

In a particularly insightful section on "disappearances," Mesinai examined what she called "one of the most powerful tools of the Soviet system"-isolating prisoners who were under investigation. Isolation frequently involved providing prisoners with a number instead of a name and thereby concealing all data about their identities, not only from their fellow inmates but also from those who guarded them.113 This secreting away of prisoners, a system that had its origins in the czarist empire, was maintained by the communists, who found it to be "particularly useful to Soviet prison authorities" in handling arrested nationalist leaders. Mesinai provided examples of many such numbered prisoners, and she found that in many instances the only person with access to the numbered prisoner's personal file was the warden or deputy head of the facility in which he was imprisoned.

Registration cards-and, in the case of numbered prisoners, cell cards-would be returned to the head of the Prison Department/Directorate. When information regarding these prisoners was passed to another security official, it would be done in "sealed packets." Mesinai cited a report prepared by the chairman of the Swedish group, Ambassador Magnusson, in which a transferred "sealed packet" from 1947 contained "certain pages and personal documents" associated with Wallenberg. Noted on the packet was the caution that "the materials concerned the arrested Number 7"; the packet was to be opened only by permission of certain security leaders.

For Mesinai, this clearly indicated that Wallenberg was, at least temporarily, a numbered prisoner while under investigation in Moscow prisons. Since Wallenberg signed the interrogation registry in his own name following his interrogation by a security official on March 11, 1947, it could be assumed that his numerical identification came after that date. However, she surmised, he would have been given a different number were he to have been sentenced rather than investigated. In a key section of her analysis, Mesinai offered this speculation: "Our findings would show that if Raoul Wallenberg 'disappeared' in 1947 rather then being executed, he was most likely sentenced … in June of 1947 as Prisoner Number 14 and sent for approximately a year to Vladimir Prison soon thereafter."

The conditional "if" is crucial. Whether or not Wallenberg occupied cells in a Gulag prison as a numbered prisoner has yet to be determined. Informed speculation points to this possibility, but only further research can lead to a conclusive finding. In Mesinai's view, two essential pieces of research needed to be undertaken. The first was a study of the annual listing of all prisoners who had died throughout the Moscow prison complex during 1945-48. This could provide a general impression or specific indication of the death of Raoul Wallenberg even as a numbered prisoner. The second essential research was a study of the so-called "decade listing" of prisoners who had died (a device about which she had learned). Mesinai believed this study would be even more "important" than the first as it might throw light on the strange circumstance that Wallenberg's alleged death in 1947 was not disclosed until a decade later.

Such studies would also undoubtedly inform another investigation in which she and her colleagues are engaged. A number of eyewitness reports place Wallenberg in Moscow prisons from the winter of 1948-

49 into 1949. An eyewitness who had once worked with Wallenberg in the Swedish legation in Budapest was "convinced" that Wallenberg was among some 100 prisoners who were transferred from Lefortovo Prison to Butyrka in March 1950.114 The studies would also prove useful to the Makinen analysis of Vladimir Prison.

Mesinai paid considerable attention to the extraordinary discovery in October 1989 of a portion of Wallenberg's personal effects as well as valuables-many of which had been in his possession on February 6, 1945.115 She concluded with a cri de coeur: It was morally and intellectually impermissible to permit politically motivated parties to bring research on the fate of Wallenberg to a premature conclusion and to accept a woefully incomplete as well as patently fraudulent historical account. With the many intriguing pieces of evidence that had accumulated regarding numbered prisoners and disappearances, the position advanced principally by the Russians that the Wallenberg case was now "history" was unacceptable. To the contrary, she wrote, "the real investigation has barely begun."116

The Makinen-Kaplan Findings

Paralleling Mesinai's investigation was an earlier analysis of prisoner card registration and a survey of who occupied which cells at Vladimir Prison conducted by Marvin Makinen, assisted by Ari Kaplan, a computer expert. In his introduction to their published findings, von Dardel explained how the project had begun. Its genesis lay in a trip he and his sister took to Moscow in 1989 as guests of the Soviet government. They were permitted to visit Vladimir Prison, 120 miles from Moscow, where there had been a number of reported sightings of Wallenberg starting in the 1940s and extending several decades. They were able to examine a few selected prison cards from a registry of some 100,000.

A team of researchers led by Makinen returned with von Dardel in 1991 at a time when the reformer Vadim Bakatin was head of the KGB. (Von Dardel called him "a strong supporter of the project.") The researchers went through 100,000 cards and selected and photographed some 2,000, particularly those of foreign prisoners or returned prisoners of war. Of special significance was their discovery of the existence of "numbered prisoners," prisoners who were not registered under their own names.117 Although cards for Wallenberg and Langfelder were not found, with the development of more sophisticated methods by Makinen and Kaplan, von Dardel was able to conclude that the new evidence "strongly indicates that Raoul Wallenberg had indeed been in the Vladimir Prison well beyond the official 1947 death date."

From 1993 through 1997, von Dardel and Makinen made several trips to Vladimir Prison to interview present and former employees. Among them was Varvara Ivanovna Larina, a former assistant in the hospital clinic building known as Korpus 2. She had worked there since 1946, when she was just sixteen years of age. In December 1993, Makinen interviewed Larina in the office of the chief physician of the prison. The name of Raoul Wallenberg was never mentioned to her; she was simply informed that Makinen was part of a group seeking to trace the whereabouts of various foreign individuals who were thought to be incarcerated in Vladimir at some time since the late 1940s.118 From her answers to their questions, Larina showed no indication that she followed international news whether on the radio, on television, or in the newspapers.

It was Larina, as noted earlier, who was able to select a photograph of Wallenberg (a side view) from a sizable number of random photos. Taken in Budapest, the image had never been shown previously. (This photograph was presented in the Makinen-Kaplan study.) She identified the man in the picture as the foreign prisoner in solitary confinement on the third floor of Korpus 2. In subsequent meetings with Makinen, a year later and two years later, she again selected the same photo of Wallenberg from a random group of pictures. Even more startling, when she was shown a series of images that had been generated by a forensic specialist who sought to portray what Wallenberg might have looked like as he aged from forty to fifty, she again chose the image of the foreign prisoner in solitary confinement.119

Equally compelling were findings derived from Makinen and Kaplan's database comprised of the registration cards of all prisoners in Vladimir's Korpus 2 between January 1, 1947, and December 31, 1972. They selected this period because it corresponded to the Soviet government's alleged time frame for Wallenberg's death as well as the last reported sighting of Wallenberg, supposedly March-April 1972. At the same time, Makinen-Kaplan constructed a chronological history of the occupancy of all cells with special emphasis on isolation cells for numbered prisoners. Korpus 2 served as both a medical facility and isolation unit for such prisoners.

Especially revealing were the findings of the Makinen-Kaplan team in their study of the movements of prisoners into and out of different prison cells. While the cell numbers of normal prisoners could be ascertained from prisoner registration cards, the researchers determined that cells holding numbered or secret prisoners were indicated as empty spaces.120 The category of "empty space" provided a crucial insight: When an empty space at a specific time frame corresponded with an eyewitness report of a sighting of Wallenberg, it might very well indicate the strong possibility of Wallenberg's having been the numbered prisoner.

From their elaborate tracking of cell occupancy and prisoner movement throughout Vladimir Prison from 1947 to 1972, Makinen and Kaplan concluded that the official Soviet line about Wallenberg's dying in July 1947 lacked credibility. The results of their investigation "strongly suggest that he lived incarcerated in the Soviet Union into the 1960s and possible the 1970s and further."121 The researchers cannot, of course, definitively prove their case. But they have not only raised serious doubts about the Kremlin's 1947 date; they have also provided additional support for the alternative hypothesis that Wallenberg was alive long after that date-more than enough support to warrant continuing investigation and research.

At the separate Stockholm press conference of the independent consultants on January 12, Professor Makinen pointed the way forward to resolving the lingering uncertainty about Wallenberg's fate. He said: "We will come to the real conclusion of what happened eventually, but we need complete access to documents."122 This understanding was echoed, at least to some degree, in the conclusion of the Swedish working group's report.

Sightings and Their Importance

A similar theme was eloquently expounded in the investigative report of the journalist Susanne Berger.123 Initially, she sought to determine what happened to Wallenberg after 1947. She opened with the observation of Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov in his Memoirs challenging the thesis that Wallenberg's file was "destroyed" as being "almost assuredly untrue…." Sakharov's remarks at a press conference in September 1989 also impelled her to undertake her inquiry: "The file of a Foreign Diplomat isn't likely to have been destroyed as it might one day prove very important for the reputation of the country and its leadership...."124

As a point of departure, Berger cited a ten-page memorandum from Abakumov, the head of Soviet state security, sent to Stalin on July 17, 1947-the same day Wallenberg was supposed to have perished. That memo, titled "Report about… Conducting Investigations on the Affairs of Spies, Saboteurs, Terrorists and Members of the Anti-Soviet Underground," underscored, Berger noted, "how obsessed" the Soviet leadership was with the need to identify and eradicate foreign intelligence networks, but no reference to Wallenberg appeared in the report.125 More importantly, she recalled that the Wallenberg case was "still at an early stage of processing," as was evidenced by the relatively few occasions on which he had been interrogated up to that point. This ineluctably led to the conjecture that it was unlikely the Soviets would have killed him before extracting whatever valuable intelligence information he might have possessed.

Buttressing this conjecture, Berger pointed to the extraordinary comment made by high Soviet security official Pitovranov on Swedish television in 1992 that "Stalin would not have killed him." She speculated that Stalin might have decided to isolate Wallenberg as a numbered and nameless prisoner to be processed at a later time. In defense of this thesis, Berger stressed a 1956 communication from a high KGB official to a Soviet Foreign Ministry official who was asking how to answer Swedish inquiries about Wallenberg. "It is better to mention, probably," the KGB official suggested, "that the reason for the lack of information about Wallenberg was caused by the fact that he might have been kept in the Soviet Union from the first days after the war until his death under another last name." The pertinence of this bit of advice was considerable, in her view, as it must have been drawn from Wallenberg's file. Moreover, the document "clearly indicates" that "key information" about Wallenberg existed with the KGB Foreign Intelligence Section-the SVR-in the mid-fifties.

If, then, it is quite possible that Wallenberg survived his official "death" in 1947, it is imperative that an inquiry into his fate should begin with identifying and interviewing direct eyewitnesses and those with hearsay evidence of his existence. This was precisely how Berger launched her study and, crucially, she discovered that close examination of eyewitness testimony did not result in a random assortment of incongruent or conflicting accounts; instead, "a large number of witness statements fit a very general pattern."126 While the breakdown must necessarily be rough, it appeared that Wallenberg was reportedly seen in prisons in the Moscow area during 1947-49, in the Far East and Vorkuta in 1952-54, and in Vladimir during 1954-70.127Berger summarized the testimony of the more believable and perceptive eyewitness accounts at some length. While she was careful to avoid making definitive judgments regarding the credibility of the accounts, she implied that a number of them warranted further inquiry. Moreover, the general pattern of the reports suggested the conceptual framework upon which to base further investigation.

Of special interest was a psychological hospital in Moscow, the Psycho-Neurological Dispensary No. 13. A Hungarian who had been arrested in the Soviet Union in 1979 was brought there in 1981. According to his account (which he later shared with Swedish officials in Spain), when he asked a nurse whether there were any other foreigners in the facility, she responded that there was one, that his name was Wallenberg, and that he had been there three years. The nurse later identified a totally "apathetic" wheelchair patient as Wallenberg.

Swedish officials later learned from the CIA that such hospital clinics "have been used to detain and 'assess' Soviet political dissidents on a short term … basis."128 According to Berger, who, together with Susan Mesinai, visited the facility in May 2000, the testimony of the former Hungarian prisoner "is currently under further review," but she provided no further specifics. A correspondent of the Times of London who also investigated the hospital on January 12, 2001, observed that it was a place where Raoul Wallenberg "could have spent his last years."129

The imprisonment of Wallenberg in a mental hospital was at the center of a major controversy previously discussed, the Svartz-Miasnikov encounter in January 1961. According to Svartz, the Russian scientist told her that a very ill Wallenberg was being held in a mental hospital. Among the crucial questions that have been raised about this discussion was whether Miasnikov's knowledge of German permitted him to grasp the full meaning of what was being said and to communicate his meaning accurately. Miasnikov later claimed that his poor German caused him to misunderstand what Svartz said as well as caused him to confuse or mislead her inadvertently.

After examining the evidence and conducting numerous interviews, Berger concluded that "there are countless witnesses who confirm that both spoke fluent German and the communication between the two had never been hampered by language differences."130 Drawing from documentation in the Swedish Foreign Ministry archives, Berger reported that Svartz was very certain of the details of her conversation and that Miasnikov answered "spontaneously" to her question about Wallenberg. Moreover, Svartz recalled, the Russian went pale as soon as he had told her about Wallenberg's dire situation.

The documents also showed that a second Soviet doctor, Speransky, was present when Wallenberg was discussed. Svartz returned to Moscow in March and had a second meeting with Miasnikov and Speransky on March 21, 1961. (The first was in January.) She later reported to the Swedish ambassador in Moscow that she was taken aback by how "pale and nervous" both looked. Miasnikov was quoted as telling her that "in the Soviet Union no one is authorized to speak about other things than art and science." When Miasnikov made this remark, Speransky suffered a major coughing fit. When Svartz asked if she could see Wallenberg, Miasnikov answered that this had to be decided at a higher level, adding, "if he is not dead."

There was yet a third meeting, this one on March 23, with only Miasnikov and Svartz present. By then it was clear to Svartz that Miasnikov had panicked because he had been made painfully aware of the potential political ramifications of his disclosure. He told her that Khrushchev was "furious" and that Soviet deputy foreign minister V. S. Semenov had visited him for several hours only a few days prior to their meeting and "he knows everything." Miasnikov went on to say: "I do not know where Wallenberg is found. Perhaps he is dead." To which Svartz replied: "Then he must have died quite recently since you told me in January that he was in a psychiatric facility and you asked whether I wanted to see him." Miasnikov responded, "Did I say that?"

This was the first occasion on which he articulated this phrase-it would become his standard rhetorical evasion-as well as offering what would become his classic rationale: "That had to be a misunderstanding based on my bad German. I know nothing about Wallenberg." Svartz reminded him that he had said that he "knew the case well" and that Wallenberg was "mentally ill." It was at this point that Miasnikov indirectly revealed why his disclosure was a dangerous act. He chastised Svartz for presumably informing Swedish officials about what he had considered to be "a private conversation." He added that it was "very inappropriate of you not to consider the matter confidentially." The why was then made clear: "There should not have been a letter to Khrushchev. That makes matters more difficult and he took the matter, as I said, badly."131

According to Berger, Svartz told Miasnikov that "things have been held confidential," though, in fact, she had informed officials in the Swedish embassy, leading Prime Minister Erlander to write to Khrushchev on February 9, 1961, asking him to arrange for Wallenberg to be examined by Swedish physicians and returned home. But Miasnikov's complaint was beside the point in any case; Berger emphasized: "meetings with visiting foreigners were carefully monitored." In addition, every Russian who held a "private" conversation with a foreigner was required to file a report to higher authorities summarizing its content. Nor was Miasnikov the most honorable, inwardly motivated scientific colleague. Eventually, under Communist Party pressure, he denied ever mentioning Wallenberg. Swedish security police archives also revealed that Miasnikov testified in the notorious "Doctors' Plot" against one of the nine indicted doctors, V. N. Vinogradov, who was wildly accused of having murdered Stalin's principal aide, Andrei Zhdanov.

Witness Testimonies and Prisoner Exchange

The eyewitness testimonies offer insight into a key feature of the Wallenberg mystery-why he was not returned to Sweden in a prisoner exchange. Berger provided an in-depth exploration of this subject, beginning with a quotation from a 1986 report from Swedish ambassador Rune Nystroem: "That Raoul Wallenberg could have been exchanged for persons in Sweden was a question that came up, or at least was suggested by the Soviets at a very early stage in the Raoul Wallenberg case. On the Swedish side, however, it appears that the suggestion was either not understood or it was felt that it was not possible to agree to an exchange."132 Berger speculated that Nystroem's acknowledgment was possibly the first of its kind.

She fleshed out the story of the nonexchange, filling in details going back to 1946 when the Soviets were probing the possibility with Swedish ambassador Söderblom or with his chargé d'affaires. They were either brushed off or misunderstood. If the chargé, Ulf Barck-Holst, did understand the Russians' intentions and sought to interest his superiors in Stockholm in the hints emanating from Moscow, he encountered only indifference.

Occasionally the episodes recounted by Berger are shadowy with ill-defined contours, but Berger saw them as missing puzzle pieces that, properly fixed within the framework of the Wallenberg narrative, might help provide the full picture. An example was CIA archival material released in December 1993

that contained a document from January 1953 referring to a possible exchange of Wallenberg for Soviet spy Stig Enblom. The offer was relayed through a German, a Karl Kindermann, who worked for Germany's domestic intelligence service in 1953. Kindermann was reported as being frustrated in getting a Swedish response, but much of the material about the case lacked substantive detail about his motivations.

More weighty, as well as intriguing, is material from the 1991 memoirs of Carl Persson, former director of Swedish security police. A certain Carl-Gustav Svingel, who was active in the Swedish Lutheran Church, was approached in December 1965 by a "Mr. X," who claimed to have excellent connections with Soviet and East German communist officials. Mr. X was Wolfgang Vogel, a lawyer who had been prominent in East-West exchanges. According to Berger's account, in which she drew upon Persson's material, Mr. X wondered whether Sweden would be interested in some form of "compensation" by the Soviets for the release of one of their recently convicted spies, Stig Wennerström, a high-ranking Swedish army officer.

Initially, when Svingel told his East Bloc contacts that Sweden would be very interested in obtaining Wallenberg, their response was that "he does not exist." Swedish officials then pondered whether Svingel ought to be encouraged to continue his conversations with Mr. X, and decided not to pursue the option. The decision offended Persson, whose umbrage is articulated in this passage in his memoirs: "an innocent man is languishing in jail for 21 years."133

Despite the Swedes' negative response, the Svingel-Vogel discussions continued, but what actually transpired between the two cannot be accurately ascertained. According to Svingel, at the end of 1968 Vogel told him to ask the Swedish government if they were willing to negotiate clemency for Wennerström in an exchange "for the man you have interest in to go free." But each questioned the reliability of the other's recollections. Svingel did maintain some contact with Swedish security officials, but it was impossible to determine the credibility of his assertions. Berger concluded that "the issue remains unresolved."134

A principal focus of Berger's inquiry is reflected in her title: "Swedish Aspects." Her report provided the disconcerting and depressing background for Prime Minister Persson's apologia on January 12. After examining the Söderblom fiasco, she called attention to the events of 1956-57 that produced the Gromyko report with its infamous Smoltsov Memorandum. Swedish prime minister Tage Erlander was scheduled to visit Moscow in April 1956, but Wallenberg's family, after meeting Erlander, was not impressed by how forthright he might be. Wallenberg's stepfather, Fredrik von Dardel, recorded in his diary that when he met with the prime minister, he "showed himself to be surprisingly uninformed about Raoul's case, but listened with increased interest." Overall, however, Erlander did not inspire confidence in von Dardel. He left "a rather weak impression … very unlikely to get anywhere with the Russian gangsters…." Wallenberg's mother was described in the diary as "very depressed and disillusioned...."135

Especially disturbing was the confidential evaluation of the Gromyko memo by Swedish foreign minister Östen Undén:

It appears that Wallenberg is dead.... One can of course speculate about other possibilities that, for example, Wallenberg has disappeared or is in such condition that he cannot be shown. Those are theoretical possibilities but very unlikely. To maintain or to build up a relationship with the Soviet Union without sacrificing more important values belongs to our most important tasks.... In my opinion, we have no reason to hold a continuous grudge against the Soviet Union....136 That the Swedes considered this assessment to be particularly sensitive was indicated in a note attached to it by a top Foreign Ministry official to the Swedish ambassador in Moscow: "I would be grateful if you would burn

the document after reading."

In Berger's judgment, Undén's approach displayed "the latent passivity that had marked the actions of the Wallenberg case in the early years and remained present in some form ever since…." Arne Ruth had also employed the term "passivity" in his Washington Post article to characterize Swedish conduct. What Berger denominated the "Undén-mindset" was particularly noticeable in Sweden's ineffectual handling of witness testimonies. She was similarly skeptical of Sweden's management of the Stig Wennerström spy case: Why did it not form the basis for a prisoner exchange that would have freed Wallenberg? Berger concluded by noting that the Wennerström file in Swedish security archives "remains classified."

Berger's report drew two major conclusions.137 First, it was necessary to expose "the biggest myth" that had enveloped the Wallenberg case and that had led many to a self-defeating attitude of "wise passivity" with regard to solving it: "That the truth about his fate can never be known." Persistent research had produced valuable new evidence even as it had raised questions requiring further examination. In Berger's view, a more systematic evaluation of witness testimonies would likely lead to additional breakthroughs. This could happen, of course, only with "direct access to documentation." It is the same plea voiced by the other consultants.

The American Role or Lack Thereof

Conspicuously absent from the press conference and postconference functions were representatives from an all-but-forgotten historical player in the Raoul Wallenberg tragedy: the United States. It was, after all, the American government, through its War Refugee Board, that had approached Wallenberg in the late spring of 1944 and, after intensive interviews by a board official in Stockholm, had hired the thirty-two-year-old Swede to undertake the rescue of Jews in Nazi-occupied Budapest.

Through U.S. intervention with the Swedish government, Wallenberg acquired the diplomatic status of secretary in the Swedish legation in Hungary, and the U.S. War Refugee Board funded his humanitarian work. The board was also in overall charge of the rescue program he led so courageously. Despite that relationship, and except for a few mainly indirect initiatives undertaken shortly after Soviet forces detained him, the United States ceased to be openly involved in his case. And, over a half century later, despite Wallenberg's contemporary iconic status, it did not even choose to issue a statement on the

occasion of the release of the studies of the two separate sections comprising the Swedish-Russian Working Group. Yet, like Banquo's ghost, the U.S. presence hovered uneasily over the January 12 proceedings.

Paradoxically, nowhere in the world is public interest in Wallenberg greater. His presence is ubiquitous across the United States. His heroism is memorialized in the scores of squares and streets in American cities that bear his name, in the drive that borders the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and at a major site in New York opposite the United Nations. A bronze bust of Wallenberg, sculpted by a celebrated Israeli artist, stands at the symbolic vortex of America's traditions and values: the rotunda of the nation's Capitol. Only a tiny handful of foreigners occupy such a place of honor in the American imagination and in its sacred places.

Five years ago the U.S. Postal Service arranged for the creation of an unprecedented stamp design for the Swedish hero that carefully avoided conveying the impression that he was dead. The absence of definitive proof as well as the existence of eyewitness testimony that he might still be alive led the Postal Service to craft a statement on the occasion of the stamp's release that deliberately eschewed use of the term "commemorative" in describing the stamp. In most cases, those honored on U.S. stamps are no longer living.138

Both the installation of the bust in the rotunda and the decision to produce the unique stamp were the result of the initiative of a congressman from San Mateo, California-Representative Tom Lantos, now the ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee. A champion of human rights around the world, Lantos is an extraordinarily gifted member of the House and a powerful orator with expertise in many legislative spheres. What also distinguishes him from all his legislative colleagues is that he is the only Holocaust survivor who serves in Congress. Both he and his wife, Annette, consider that they owe their very lives to Raoul Wallenberg. Annette recalls how she considered him the "Moses from the North."

Representative Lantos could not rest content with honoring Wallenberg symbolically. Twenty years ago, on March 26, 1981, he drafted legislation to make Raoul Wallenberg an "honorary citizen" of the United States. Congress adopted the legislation in September of 1981, and President Reagan signed it into law on October 5. With the exception of Sir Winston Churchill, no other foreigner-until then-had ever had this distinction bestowed upon him. The legislation also had a practical purpose; it was intended to stimulate and as well as provide a legal foundation for formal U.S. intervention on behalf of Wallenberg. For too long a time and for reasons that remain obscure-and thus troubling-the United States did not actively intervene. It was Lantos's hope that, even though introduced belatedly, the legislation might prompt a new American diplomatic approach to resolve the matter once and for all.

It is not clear when the U.S. government first learned that the Soviets had detained Wallenberg in mid-January of 1945 and had imprisoned him three weeks later. Swedish officials knew as early as January 16, 1945; the source was a memorandum from Soviet deputy foreign minister Dekanosov informing them that Wallenberg was being held under the protection of the Soviet armed forces. It seems highly probable that the Swedes would have passed this information along to Wallenberg's American employers promptly, yet there is no documentation attesting to the Swedes' alerting U.S. officials. If the Swedes did inform the Americans, the United States still might have been hesitant to act as a result of the advice of the Soviet ambassador to Sweden, Aleksandra Kollontai. The ambassador, who told Wallenberg's mother about Wallenberg's arrest in February, reportedly said: "He will be back, but don't make too much noise about it."

By April, the U.S. minister in Stockholm had informed the State Department about Wallenberg's situation, and he urged the department to instruct the American ambassador in Moscow, Averell

Harriman, to assist the Swedish legation in obtaining Wallenberg's release. The basis for this appeal was that the United States "had a special interest in Wallenberg's mission to Hungary."139 U.S. secretary of state Edward Stettinius promptly acted upon the recommendation, cabling Harriman to extend "all possible support to the Swedes." But the Swedish envoy in Moscow was the blundering fool Söderblom who had rebuffed Harriman's offer and advised his Foreign Ministry in Stockholm: "What good would the American's interference do?"

The answer to that question-denigrated into merely a rhetorical one by Söderblom-is obvious: American intervention at this point could have been crucial, even decisive. America remained an ally of the Soviet Union, and cooperation was fairly close as the war against Nazi Germany approached its end. Only two months earlier, the Yalta Conference of Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin had been held to plan a common program with reference to Germany and East Europe. Despite an ineptitude that borders on the criminal, the Swedish report provides no evidence that Söderblom received any form of official reprimand for disastrous incompetence.

Of greater moral and historical importance to Americans is the question of why the State Department, given its close relationship to Moscow at that time, did not independently take up Wallenberg's cause. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. asked the then executive director of the War Refugee Board, which came under the jurisdiction of Treasury, to "let Stettinius know that [he was] personally interested in this man [Wallenberg]." If that message was conveyed, the State Department's hesitancy is puzzling, to say the least.

Not everyone involved in the diplomatic process was so reticent. Susanne Berger related that a key U.S. military official with the Allied Control Commission in Debrecen (the ACC was comprised of high military officials of the United States, Britain, and the USSR) asked his Russian opposite number in May 1945 directly about Wallenberg as well as about Feller and Meier. And, acting on a State Department request, Gen. William S. Key formally raised the issue of the disappearance of the three diplomats on May 7, 1945, explaining "that our government was most anxious to learn of their status."140 Again on May 11 and May 21, the United States queried the Russians on the ACC, stressing the importance of the issue. On May 22, an aide to General Key reported that the Soviet military officer took down the three names. The Russian thought "they were very likely in a large camp with many other prisoners…." The same Soviet officer reported that he believed they were "being held by Russians" and that "we would be informed" as soon as he had more information.

With discussions taking place among fairly high-level military personnel of the ACC, Susan Mesinai believed that May 1945 represented a tantalizing lost opportunity; it was "a more fluid … period for exchange negotiations" and could have proved productive.141 But the military discussions in Hungary were not matched by direct diplomatic negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Once the Swedish ambassador had rejected U.S. diplomatic assistance on behalf of Wallenberg, apparently no further direct initiatives by Washington were undertaken. Perhaps the death of President Roosevelt, who had created the War Refugee Board, caused a dramatic lessening of interest in Washington. (He died on April 12-only three days after Secretary of State Stettinius had instructed Harriman to offer U.S. assistance to the Swedes.) In the major biography of Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, by David McCullough, there is not a single reference to Wallenberg.

American Passivity and the Physical Threat to Wallenberg

By September 1945 the State Department had reason to be deeply concerned about Wallenberg's condition, even about his very survival. According to Susanne Berger, it had received a communication from its Stockholm legation to the effect that while Wallenberg might still be in Moscow hands, the legation's Swedish Foreign Office source believed "the Soviets will never produce Wallenberg alive." The citation appears in the initial draft of a message that Dean Acheson, then acting secretary of state, planned to send to his embassy in Moscow.142 The citation in that message has a line through it meaning that it was apparently omitted when the draft was sent. Why this signally important action was taken is unknown. A notation in the document's margin indicates that the person in charge of the State Department's Special War Problems Office "agreed to the omission."

There is no indication that the legation's warning prompted any vigorous U.S. initiative. When Wallenberg's worried mother and halfbrother wrote to President Truman they received a response from a State Department official with responsibility for refugees and displaced persons acknowledging the letter to the White House and recognizing Wallenberg's "heroic efforts" in his "collaboration with the War Refugee Board." These efforts, said the letter, "are well known to this government and are appreciated." But aside from inquiries made by the United States to determine Wallenberg's "whereabouts" through diplomatic channels, he made no commitments of any kind except of "continuing our interest in the matter...."143

Most significant was an exchange in 1947 between the prominent Republican senator from Michigan, Arthur Vandenberg, chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson. (In 1949, Acheson became secretary of state.) A letter from Wallenberg's halfbrother, Guy von Dardel, to the senator seeking his assistance prompted the exchange. Vandenberg wrote to von Dardel noting that his brother "has richly earned any helpful interest which this government can express to him." He promised to bring the letter to the personal attention of the secretary of state in order to ascertain whether "it is possible to make a special effort in your brother's behalf … since his record obviously deserved it."144

Vandenberg fulfilled his promise, but the very thought of a "special" effort by the United States was simply brushed off by Acheson:

In view of the fact that Mr. Wallenberg acted as a member of the Swedish diplomatic mission in Budapest, the initiative in inquiries directed toward the Soviet Government rests with the Swedish authorities.145 Acheson then explained what U.S. diplomatic policy had been and would be: "to support the initiative" of the Swedish government whenever U.S. assistance "is desired and will prove helpful." That was precisely the position guiding Secretary of State Stettinius and rebuffed by the Swedish

ambassador in Moscow. Though American military representatives in the Allied Control Commission had shown initiative in pursuing the truth about Wallenberg, the same cannot be said of the State Department. Even in the face of warnings that Wallenberg might not survive Soviet detention, the State Department declined to act.

Without American diplomatic initiatives that could have been leaked to the media to raise public awareness, there was no means of galvanizing public opinion against Soviet policy. This turned out to be a great pity as well as a tremendous tactical misadventure considering that the Kremlin was highly sensitive to public opinion; it was nothing less than obsessed about its image abroad, both during and after World War II. With no diplomacy to report that might have served as a peg on which to hang the Wallenberg story, there was, in effect, a news blackout. As noted, not a single piece on Wallenberg appeared in the New York Times until 1952. The media vacuum resulting from complete diplomatic inactivity gave the USSR carte blanche; it could do whatever it wished with impunity.

Of course the Swedes must accept their fair share of blame. During the early postwar years, Swedish diplomacy regarding Wallenberg was a disgrace; it was characterized by a series of blundering mistakes, as was acknowledged by Sweden's prime minister on January 12 and by the Swedish group in its formal report. But Swedish diplomatic and political power vis-à-vis the Soviet totalitarian regime was distinctly less formidable than that of the United States. American involvement would have been far more difficult to rebuff. It remains utterly baffling as well as deeply dismaying that not a jot of American diplomatic power was utilized, especially since Wallenberg was an employee of the American government through the U.S. War Refugee Board.

Wallenberg's family did not quit. In July 1949 Guy von Dardel went to see Acheson, now secretary of state, and wondered aloud whether the United States might not weigh a prisoner exchange "even if he [Wallenberg] is not an American citizen himself." After all, his brother "set out on his dangerous mission chiefly on the initiative of the American War Refugee Board" and shouldn't this entitle him "to all possible help from the American side." Acheson did not respond to this proposal but did promise "any assistance that the U.S. can give."146 It may be that once again the United States offered the Swedes diplomatic assistance but-as in the case of the Harriman-Söderblom discussions in April 1945-the Swedes rebuffed the United States. A later Swedish ambassador in Moscow declared: "We cannot drive in tandem with the Americans."

It was not until 1951 that Sweden sought U.S. help in resolving the Wallenberg case, according to Susanne Berger. At that time the CIA reported that it was not too familiar with the subject. A CIA official complained that "there is great lack of information" at CIA headquarters "concerning the subject." Given a background of official U.S. indifference, the answer was hardly surprising. Still, the CIA communication made a special point of noting the Swedes' previous reluctance to involve the United States.: "It seems rather strange that the … initial request for aid and information should come more than six years after the disappearance of the subject."147

Whether the Swedish request for CIA assistance with Wallenberg had any impact on U.S. policy is impossible to ascertain, except in one instance. When in 1957 Foreign Minister Undén informed the United States that his government was prepared to accept the official Kremlin line that Wallenberg had died of a heart attack in Lubyanka Prison in July 1947, the CIA responded sharply. A highly placed CIA official dispatched what Berger called "a strongly worded telegram" chastising the Swedes for complicity in allowing the Russians to "get away with an obviously false claim…."148

Almost unbelievable in retrospect, yet another sixteen years would pass before some in the U.S. State Department attempted a more activist and independent, if extremely modest, initiative regarding Wallenberg. It was promoted by a letter from Wallenberg's aged and ailing mother to Secretary of State

Henry Kissinger in 1973 seeking his assistance in ascertaining what had happened to her son.149 Her request was discussed at length in the department's European Bureau, then headed by Assistant Secretary of State Walter J. Stoessel (later under secretary for political affairs). The bureau worked with the director of Kissinger's office, Thomas Pickering, to prepare a memorandum to Kissinger signed by Pickering proposing that the United States formally ask the Soviet authorities to provide an account of Wallenberg's fate. In addition, a draft letter was prepared that would be sent to the mother informing her of the department's plans. The draft letter was particularly warm and sensitive. It was also stillborn.

"Disapproved" was Kissinger's reaction, noted on the draft memorandum on October 15, 1973. Later Pickering told an interviewer that the likely motivation of the then secretary of state was that he had "more important fish to fry." Kissinger's overall strategic goal at the time was achieving détente with the USSR, and he may have thought that U.S. intervention in the form of a formal inquiry about Wallenberg might harm it. In the interview Pickering said he had been "disappointed" with Kissinger's disapproval. In early July 2000, Pickering expressed continued "interest" in the Wallenberg case, but at the beginning of the following year he retired from the State Department. 150

Only in the eighties in the context of Helsinki forums (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE) did Washington alter its quarter-century policy of silence about Wallenberg and take the initiative in raising the issue to the public embarrassment of the USSR.151 At the Madrid forum in November 1980, U.S. ambassador Max Kampelman pressed the Swedish ambassador to launch a discussion about the fate of Wallenberg. Immediately thereafter, by prearrangement, Kampelman spoke in support of the Swedish initiative and demanded disclosure by the Kremlin of "the facts about [Wallenberg's] disappearance."

In the Vienna forum in September 1988, U.S. ambassador Warren Zimmermann broke with precedent and discarded the traditional secondary role of the United States with regard to diplomacy on Wallenberg. He publicly called for "a full and open accounting of that part of Soviet history affecting a man who stood for so much of the [Helsinki or CSCE] ideals to which we are dedicated." U.S. leadership prompted the British, Canadian, and Hungarian ambassadors to speak out. It was very effective public diplomacy, with the challenge to the Kremlin carried into the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe by Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, and other media. Moscow's ambassador felt compelled to issue a profuse apology about the fate of Wallenberg and extol his "noble activities." America's new-fledged public diplomacy may have triggered the Kremlin's invitation to the Wallenberg family to visit Moscow the following year, in October 1989. But it was "public diplomacy" alone that was practiced at CSCE, not the tough kind of private give-and-take that, through direct negotiations, might have produced results. In that sphere, where it really counted, the old U.S. policy remained in place.

The American Jewish Committee Initiative

Fifty-five years after Wallenberg entered the Gulag the American Jewish Committee (AJC) launched a campaign urging the U.S. government to take a more activist role. Some twenty years earlier, AJC had also assisted Representative Tom Lantos in promoting "honorary" citizenship for Wallenberg. Now, in January 2000, with the publication of a critical study titled The Wallenberg Mystery, it called on the United States to seek the cooperation of Russian president Putin to "fully open the Soviet-era archives and reveal the truth" about why the Swedish diplomat had been detained and what happened to him.152

The day after the fifty-fifth anniversary, AJC's executive director, David Harris, wrote an op-ed for the Washington Post, "Open the Files on Raoul Wallenberg," which emphasized that "Washington has yet to adequately press Moscow at the highest level."153 Harris noted that since 1945 no U.S. secretary of state had raised the matter of Wallenberg's disappearance with the Russian leadership. The same op-ed was carried the following day in the International Herald Tribune under the heading "The Hour of Truth for Wallenberg," and the piece was reprinted in a number of U.S. papers.

At the same time AJC's president, Bruce Ramer, joined Harris in writing to President Clinton, emphasizing that the mystery of Wallenberg's "fate remains with us." The letter urged the president to intervene with the Kremlin openly and to press the Russians to "allow the full story of Raoul Wallenberg to be told."154 Noting that Wallenberg was made an honorary American citizen by the United States in recognition of his extraordinary rescue efforts, the letter called attention to efforts made by the administration to "bring closure" to "unresolved issues of the Holocaust." The closing words of the letter carried a powerful reminder: "The case of Raoul Wallenberg deserves no less."

Two months later the State Department's response arrived in the shape of a letter to AJC's leaders from its top specialist on Russia and the former Soviet Union, Ambassador-at-Large Stephen Sestanovich. Sestanovich wrote, "We share your deep concern about Mr. Wallenberg's case [and] that we concur that the Russians are the most important potential source of information about his fate."155 This expression of solidarity offered some hope. Was a reversal of the views of Acheson and Kissinger imminent at long last? Then came the comment that drearily echoed Stettinius and later Acheson. Sestanovich referred to a Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, held in mid-January 2000, adding that the U.S. delegation to the forum, led by a deputy secretary of the Treasury, "offered to assist the Swedes by pressing the Russians to open their archives."

It was the old theme replayed yet again: consult first with the Swedes, let them take the lead, become dependent on their response (or lack thereof), and thus pass the buck. Indeed, the reaction of the Swedes was exactly the same as that of Ambassador Söderblom and his successor in Moscow:

The Swedes assured our delegation that they had an open channel of communication with the Russians; they expressed concern that pressure from the U.S. might, in fact, be counterproductive. Even the language of the State Department specialist echoed that employed more than a half century before.

Sestanovich then referred to the forthcoming reports of the Swedish-Russian Working Group expected by the end of 2000, noting that the Swedes had told the U.S. delegation that they planned "to issue a report on their findings…." The comment was encouraging. "We plan to wait for that report before again reviewing whether to raise the Wallenberg case directly with Russia at high levels." This was precisely

what the committee leaders had been urging. In light of the findings, would the United States be prepared-finally-to assume diplomatic leadership in the quest for the truth about Wallenberg?

But the hollow official rhetoric of Sestanovich's concluding paragraph was a disappointment. "Let me assure you," it read, "that Mr. Wallenberg's case will remain a U.S. foreign policy priority until the facts are finally unearthed." The tired, hackneyed, euphemistic language and the transparently inaccurate and self-serving characterization of America's disgraceful record drained away credibility. Surely, gaining Wallenberg's release-or simply ascertaining the truth about his fate-had hardly been a priority of U.S. foreign policy since April 1945.

Still, a commitment had been made by the United States to review its policy once the Swedish-Russian Working Group reports were published. That commitment placed enormous emphasis on the reports, and instantly raised the issue of their persuasive power, comprehensiveness, and hence final credibility. How conclusive-and therefore how determinative-could they be in guiding and, especially, changing U.S. policy? The Swedish report emphasized that the Russians had doggedly denied them many of the documents they sought to examine. Important files concerning Wallenberg's fellow prisoners also remained inaccessible, under lock and key.

The Swedish report stressed that there was "more to be done to obtain further papers from various archives," notably from Russia's foreign intelligence service. It specifically decried the "refusal of SVR," the Russian foreign intelligence source, to allow the study of the file of one Tolstoy-Kutuzov, who had played a most uncertain and dubious role in the Wallenberg case.

A relation of descendants of Russia's greatest novelist, Count Michael Tolstoy-Kutuzov had fled Russia long before the war and settled in Belgium. Somehow, through an arrangement between neutral Sweden and the USSR during World War II, he, together with his Belgian wife, came to manage a medical facility in Budapest that serviced wounded Soviet prisoners of war. Technically, the facility was under the supervision of the Swedish legation, but little is known about what Tolstoy-Kutuzov actually did in his managerial capacity.

Once the Red Army occupied Budapest, Tolstoy-Kutuzov was quickly recruited by the Soviets to become the chief of a Bureau for Foreigners functioning under the direction of the Soviet military command. All legations and consulates in Budapest, including Sweden's, came under the bureau's jurisdiction. The precise nature of the relationship between this shadowy figure and the Soviets remains an unsolved mystery. Tolstoy-Kutuzov was of course quite familiar with all members of the Swedish legation, including Wallenberg. Not surprisingly, the members of the Swedish working group sought to examine Tolstoy-Kutuzov's file. Their request was rebuffed by the Russian foreign intelligence service-an action that could not but generate deep suspicion about his role in Wallenberg's apprehension and incarceration.

In its conclusion, the Swedish report posed seventeen critical questions for which "complete answers" must be provided to explain Wallenberg's detention and fate.156 With one or two exceptions, all of them were addressed to the Kremlin, which alone had the answers.

Since the Swedes have been unable to get the Russians to respond to them and have been equally unsuccessful in gaining access to pertinent Russian archives, it behooves the United States to use its leverage to press Moscow on these matters. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the historic act conferring honorary American citizenship on Raoul Wallenberg, it is, at long last, time for Washington to demand the truth.

Post-Stockholm Press Conferences: Unanswered Questions

In the wake of the January 2001 Stockholm press conference, the Russians launched a media counteroffensive that demonstrated why it is imperative that all Kremlin files related to Wallenberg be more fully mined and closely examined, including those already accessible and those still off limits. A series of press releases and press conferences in Moscow vigorously rebutted the report of the Swedish group. This followed the pattern set by the releases of the Rehabilitation Commission during November-December 2000. The Russians sought to raise doubts about the thoroughness of the research and therefore challenge the report's conclusions by seeking to hoist the Swedes on their own petard. The Russians faulted the Swedes for the incompleteness of their investigation-an admission openly confessed by the Swedes themselves in their report, but owing entirely to Russian obstructionism rather than Swedish carelessness-a shrewd if thoroughly cynical maneuver by the Russians.

The Russian strategy also involved the sudden release of supposedly new, unsettling information, and Yakovlev himself was not only the mainstay of the attack on Swedish credibility but also the source of the neatly timed leaks. On the very day the Stockholm conference was held, the former Gorbachev ally and ideologue declared in Moscow that Wallenberg was killed in 1947 as a result of a vicious turf war between rival branches of the Soviet secret services.157 He explained that "there was no definite order to do it" (i.e., to kill Wallenberg); instead, "there was an interdepartmental rivalry between military intelligence and (the future) KGB and the man [Wallenberg] was a victim of this." Yakovlev then restated his standard thesis, namely, that agents of the future KGB-it was then called MGB-shot Wallenberg and then tried to hide the crime from their political masters. The MGB handled this by systematically destroying Wallenberg's files.

How could Yakovlev proffer this account unless he had access to information and documentation whose very existence had never been previously acknowledged? What was his source? Why had it been kept secret from others? His theory about a conflict between military intelligence and foreign intelligence of the dominant Kremlin security agency is intriguing and, at least, superficially plausible. He hinted at the basis of the conflict between the intelligence agencies: "Wallenberg knew an awful lot. It's no joke saving 30,000 from death camps you had to have very good contacts with German intelligence." The Soviets also believed Wallenberg had close contacts with Swedish and American intelligence. The Soviet security agencies, Yakovlev thought, "hoped for more" information from him "but they got nothing."

On the same day, in an interview published in Britain's Financial Times Yakovlev provided additional information that raised the troubling specter of slovenliness in Russian investigative methods. Queried about his earlier finding that the date of Wallenberg's execution cited in the Smoltsov Memorandum (July 17, 1947) could not have been correct, Yakovlev responded that "He was executed around this time."158 Was Yakovlev really implying that the precise date of the execution was of such little consequence? Is such imprecision the hallmark of a serious investigation? If it established nothing else, Yakovlev's comment served to undermine the Russian group's thesis that rested on Wallenberg's execution having occurred on July 17, 1947, as well as to suggest the low standard of Russian research.

But the Russians evidently perceived themselves to be on a roll, and they continued issuing headline-grabbing "revelations"-despite the skepticism their remarkably convenient timing could not help but arouse. On the next day, January 13, 2001, the military prosecutor Mikhail Kislitsyn announced that a document had only just turned up in the archives of Stalin's secret police that definitively proved Wallenberg died on July 17, 1947. Kislitsyn formally announced: "We have a note that says he died on July 17, 1947 in the detention center" of the secret police.159

Suddenly, the international community was confronted by a critically important archival document apparently overlooked by the Swedish-Russian Working Group. What, the Russians implied, does the new revelation say about the thoroughness of the investigation of the working group? Compounding the mystery, when a high official of the Rehabilitation Commission, Valery Kondratov, was asked by a reporter to confirm the existence of the fresh archival evidence, he declined to provide any details beyond verifying its existence. The fog had descended once more as the postconference "revelations" multiplied.

Yakovlev indulged in still more speculation on January 12 when he trotted out yet another explanation for the alleged murder of Wallenberg. He told an interviewer from the Financial Times of London that the KGB had probably tried to turn the Swedish diplomat into a spy and that "probably he refused. So he was destroyed. They had nothing to accuse him of."160 Once again, skeptics might ask to know the source of these surmises. Was there any concrete evidence to support the theories being floated by Yakovlev's commission?

The following week, on January 19, the Russians offered additional information that could not help but raise questions about the quality of the research upon which the reports were predicated. At a formal ceremony in Moscow, Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov handed over documents to the Swedish and Hungarian ambassadors that formally declared that Wallenberg and his driver, Langfelder, had died. "There is no doubt," said Ustinov in his remarks to the ambassadors, "that Wallenberg and his driver were deprived of their liberty and for totally political reasons."161

It is not clear which documents Ustinov turned over. But it is not improbable that they offered evidence at variance with the Russian report. How else is one to understand the phrase "totally political reasons"? That phrase cannot be found in the Russian report, and it would be helpful were Ustinov to clarify these rather vague if intriguing terms. The prosecutor general could not have coined the phrase de novo or extracted it from nonexistent materials. What, then, are his sources and how did he reach the judgment to use this phrase, particularly the term "political"?

In the same presentation, Ustinov stated that Wallenberg had been determined to be "socially dangerous." It is a profoundly troubling characterization; the terminology is freighted with singularly peculiar, oddly charged connotations. Ustinov had employed the same phrase earlier, in December. Being "socially dangerous" was deemed to be the reason for Wallenberg's detention in 1945, his later incarceration, and his presumed execution. In his remarks to the Swedish and Hungarian ambassadors, Ustinov said: "It is a bitter irony of fate that the symbol of the fight for the lives of people threatened

with death was declared socially dangerous." As earlier noted, the phrase had a strangely "Alice in Wonderland" character.

But where did this language originate? In what documents is it found? And, if it came from no specific document but was, instead, a generic tagline of Ustinov's invention drawing perhaps on references in Kremlin memoranda, perhaps he can enlighten the world about the meaning of this puzzling, disturbing phrase. It seems evident that Ustinov, or, more importantly, the one who charged him to rehabilitate Wallenberg, namely Yakovlev, had been utilizing sources quite different from those examined by the two working groups and cited in their reports. It is essential that researchers know either the historical source of this scurrilous characterization or how it took on a life of its own.

Meanwhile, a colleague of Ustinov's, Valery Kondratov, the head of the division of the Prosecutor General's Office that investigates political repression, was making additional headlines by offering yet more "new" information about the fate of Wallenberg and Langfelder. According to Kondratov, the bodies of Wallenberg and his driver were cremated and their ashes buried on the grounds of a Moscow monastery. No gravestone or marker was placed at the alleged burial spot at the vast site. What makes this "new" report so utterly unbelievable is the fact that in 1991 the original Swedish-Soviet Working Group investigated the alleged cremation of Wallenberg reported in the Smoltsov Memorandum. That investigation, conducted by the KGB, found that there was only one crematorium in all of Moscow during that period and that it kept a record of all the cremations performed there.162 Examination of the records of the crematorium revealed that the name Wallenberg did not appear in the register for the year 1947.

How did Kondratov know that Wallenberg (and his driver, who was supposedly executed in March 1948) were cremated together? Had they been given different names? The subject was not touched upon by the working group reports. Did Kondratov have access to other documents or sources that enabled him to pronounce with such unhesitating definitiveness on this neglected, though very interesting, matter? If he did, that information needs to be shared with the international community.

While Ustinov's office was trying hard to bring an end to the increasingly embarrassing Wallenberg case, the Swedish ambassador, Sven Hirdman, was not playing along. He told the press conference in Moscow: "We think that a full stop cannot be put on his fate. I do not think that from the legal point of view the Swedish government is ready legally to declare him [Wallenberg] dead."

Moscow was desperately trying to bring about some form of closure, not only through the convenient "new" disclosures floated at its press conference on January 19 but also with a goodwill gesture that day that they hoped would attract worldwide attention. Officials unveiled a bust of Wallenberg in the courtyard of a Moscow library.163 Sculpted in white stone on a gray column, it was intended to remind visitors of the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem. A relative of the Swedish hero, Jan Wallenberg, a second cousin, invited to participate in the ceremony, would not accept closure: "I really do not think he was killed in Moscow." He expressed the hope, as reported by Reuters, that someday "the truth could finally be known about what happened to his second cousin, Raoul."

Vladimir Vinogradov, the archivist colonel of the security services and a key member of the Russian group, hammered what the Russians fervently desire will be the final nail into the coffin. Two days before the unveiling ceremony, he announced at a Moscow press conference that the investigative group would be disbanded, its job now completed. He acknowledged lingering Swedish doubts about Wallenberg's supposed execution in July 1947, stating that he expected that Stockholm would continue "with attempts to clarify some issues that remain unresolved." But the rules and the players had now changed. Further investigation "will no longer be done by the Commission [the Swedish-Russian Working Group] but in response to requests to the [Russian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs."164 The ten-

year-old investigation was at an end. Except for requests for clarifications regarding relatively minor matters, the Wallenberg case was now closed. Or so the Russians hoped.

The installation of the bust was intended to symbolize Moscow's recognition of the horrors of the Soviet past, including the crimes against Wallenberg for which the current authorities are seeking atonement. But if the Russians expect these symbolic gestures to result in closure, they couldn't be more mistaken. At the unveiling of the bust, Yakovlev shouted, "Lies, lies, lies!" to describe how the case had been handled by the Kremlin in those bad old Soviet times.

Yakovlev was fulminating about the monstrous duplicities of a barbarous past, but "lies, lies, lies" continue to be uttered about the Wallenberg case today by Russia's new keepers of secrets. His own commission had exposed the hoax of the Smoltsov Memorandum. Surely, someone in authority knew it for the fraud it was when an ugly attempt was made to perpetrate it in October 1989, and not for the first time, on the visiting relatives and former colleagues of Raoul Wallenberg. It is only one of a multitude of surviving deceptions.

A host of recent official comments and revelations have mortally wounded the credibility of Moscow's favored narratives about Wallenberg, which have also been forcefully rebutted by the report of the Swedish group and those of the three independent consultants, but not yet slain them. There has yet to be a final reckoning with the truth. Closure per force remains an unrealized goal. One trusts that achieving it will not prove a forlorn hope.

Endnotes

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