

Cell Occupancy Analysis of Korpus 2 of the Vladimir Prison

An Examination of the Consistency of Eyewitness Sightings of Raoul Wallenberg
with Prisoner Registration Cards from the Prison *Kartoteka*

Report Submitted to the Swedish-Russian Working Group on the Fate of Raoul Wallenberg

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E. Conclusions and Summary

Despite the Gromyko Memorandum issued by the Soviet government to the Swedish Foreign Ministry in 1957, alleging that Raoul Wallenberg died of a myocardial infarct on July 17, 1947, in the Internal or Lubyanka Prison of Moscow, there have been a large number of reports about him in Soviet prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals by former prisoners into the 1980s. A significant number of these reports has come from the prison in the city of Vladimir in Russia, claiming Korpus 2 of the prison as the building in which Wallenberg was incarcerated. This building of the prison is well known to have served the dual function of providing hospital and medical facilities for sick prisoners and having cells which were effective in isolating prisoners from each other for long periods of time. For this reason, we have reconstructed the chronological history of the occupancy of all cells in Korpus 2 of the Vladimir Prison from prisoner registration cards in the prison *kartoteka* for the period ranging from January 1, 1947, to December 31, 1972, to examine the consistency of eyewitness reports with conditions defined by these prison documents. The years 1947 and 1972 correspond, respectively, to the purported death of Raoul Wallenberg according to the Soviet government and the last sighting of him in the Vladimir Prison, in this case as reported by Iosif Mikhailovich Terelya from March-April of 1972.

A database was constructed from the registration cards of all prisoners who were incarcerated for at least one day in Korpus 2 during their imprisonment in Vladimir between January 1, 1947, and December 31, 1972. The database was extracted from over 11,000 registration cards belonging to over 8000 prisoners and involving over 98,000 cell changes or records. The accuracy of the data was verified by specially devised algorithms to test for chronological and other types of inaccuracies introduced during construction of the database. Where necessary inconsistencies were resolved by comparison of the computer file with the original TIFF image of the computer scanned registration card, and the database was accordingly corrected. Specifically devised search algorithms were applied to analyze the database according to the chronological history of the occupancy of each cell by prisoners in Korpus 2, the pairing of prisoners in cells, and the identification of prisoners in neighboring cells. It was possible to reconstruct the occupancy of each cell in Korpus 2 on a day-by-day basis throughout the entire 25 year period investigated.

In addition to the large number of evidentiary statements and reports about Raoul Wallenberg examined against cell occupancy data, we have analyzed in great detail the occupancy of cells on the 3rd floor of Korpus 2 corresponding to the time of the death of the prisoner Osmak. Varvara Larina, an elderly, pensioned employee of the prison, described in interviews to Professor Makinen that a non-German foreign prisoner was held in solitary confinement in a cell on the opposite side of the 3rd floor at the time of Osmak's death. Not only was her description of the foreign prisoner's physical appearance compatible with that of Raoul Wallenberg, but she also consistently selected a photograph of a side profile of Wallenberg not used in the international press as the prisoner in solitary confinement, ignoring photographs of other individuals. Aleksandr Timofeyevich Kukin, a retired former head guard of Korpus 2, confirmed that the picture selected by Larina was not unlike the foreign prisoner held in solitary confinement but claimed not to remember any details about name and country of origin. Analysis of the cell occupancy data showed that the prisoner Kirill Ivanovich Osmak died on May 16, 1960, in cell 49 on the 3rd floor of Korpus 2. Several cells were without identifiable occupants on the opposite side of the 3rd floor that remained "empty" for varying periods of time, ranging from 243 to 717 days, overlapping with Osmak's death. While a detailed inspection of changes in cell occupancy from June, 1960, through January, 1961, revealed a sharp decrease in prisoner population on the 3rd floor, three well known special prisoners, Pavel Anatol'yevich Sudoplatov, Boris Georgeiyevich Menshagin, and Evgenii Stepanovich Prishlyak, continued to occupy cells also in solitary confinement on the opposite side from cell 49 throughout this period of time. The sharp decrease in prisoner population, presumably due to renovations of the building, would also be compatible with administrative efforts to ensure strict isolation of the foreign prisoner to conceal his identity. Interestingly, the three special prisoners were separated by empty cells from each other and from the cell which likely held the foreign prisoner, providing effective isolation by preventing wall tapping communications. These results show unambiguously that these cells remained totally compatible with detention of prisoners in cells despite the operational reasons for the decrease in prisoner population in other parts of the 3rd floor. The confirmation of the death of the prisoner Osmak by inspection of the *kartoteka* demonstrates the clarity and accuracy of Larina's description of conditions on the 3rd floor at that time. The identification of the foreign prisoner as Raoul Wallenberg by Larina unhesitatingly selecting his photograph, her description of his physical appearance, and the confirmation of the selected photograph by a former head guard of Korpus 2 leave little room to argue for a case of mistaken identity. These results, thus, lead essentially only to the conclusion that this prisoner was Raoul Wallenberg and provide strong doubt to his alleged death in 1947 according to the Gromyko Memorandum of the Soviet government.

We have similarly examined other evidentiary statements against the database and find striking confirmation of most reports. For example, the report of Iosef Mikhailovich Terelya from March-April, 1972, describing cells that he occupied on the 2nd floor of Korpus 2 with respect to those occupied by an elderly foreign prisoner having physical features not unlike those expected of Raoul Wallenberg, and the transfer of this prisoner from cell 2-25 to 2-33 are confirmed in every detail by the database with respect to time and location. The long period of time that cell 2-33 remains without identifiable occupants according to the registration cards available in the *kartoteka*, 233 days, provides strong reason to assume that this must have been a very important prisoner and that his identity has been concealed by removal of documents. We have also examined against the database the consistency of a number of statements by former prisoners about reported cellmates of Raoul Wallenberg. The cell histories of several of these prisoners, in particular that of Zigurds-Dzidris Ernestovich Kruminsh, the former cellmate of Francis Gary Powers, Marvin W. Makinen, and reportedly of a Swedish prisoner named "Van den Berg", shows unexplained lengthy periods of 'solitary' confinement that could correspond to sharing of cells with Wallenberg. Of particular importance is that Kruminsh himself admitted to Makinen in 1962 of having earlier met a Swedish prisoner who was "very sure that he would be well rewarded and acknowledged for his work upon his return home." Furthermore, we have analyzed the history of cellmate pairings of a large number of foreign prisoners who provided evidentiary statements upon repatriation to identify the most likely original source of information among prisoners about the presence of Raoul Wallenberg in Korpus 2. The analysis indicates that the most probable original eyewitness report of Raoul Wallenberg having been transferred to the Vladimir Prison from Moscow comes from Vitalii Vital'evich Shulgin, who reportedly stated that he was transferred on the same transport with Raoul Wallenberg. Shulgin was brought to the Vladimir Prison on July 25, 1947. The analysis confirms reports of others that the well known prisoner Semyon Levanovich Gogiberidze most likely learned of Raoul Wallenberg from a Russian prisoner in the late 1940s or early 1950s since he shared a cell for one month with Shulgin, shortly after Shulgin's arrival, and for 13 months with Pavel Anatol'evich Kutepov, who was transferred to Vladimir together with Shulgin.