



The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation

34 East 67 St. 2nd floor - New York, NY 10021

Tel 1 212 737 3275 -Fax 1 212 535 6262

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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

"ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BASIC VALUES OF A DEMOCRACY"

GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF GRADES 5 THROUGH 7

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INTRODUCTION

This two-part program raises many issues and topics related to the Social Studies Learning Standards. It will, of course, be impossible for you to cover all of these in the time allotted. Which ones you decide to focus on will depend on your individual class. This program has been developed to fit in with your mandated social studies curriculum.

Program Concepts

- A democracy values the principles, ideals and core values of human dignity, liberty, justice and equality.
- Raoul Wallenberg was a hero because he believed in these values and acted upon them by risking his life to uphold them.
- There are other people today and throughout history that are heroes in the same way.
- Governments can affect the lives of its citizens.
- The values of Nazi Germany's and the Hungarian authorities affected the human and civil rights of its citizens.
- Genocide is the systemic killing of all people from a national, ethnic or religious group or the attempt to do so.

Why Use the Life of Raoul Wallenberg?

Mr. Wallenberg was a 32 year old member of a prominent Protestant Swedish family. Yet, he volunteered to go to Nazi-occupied Budapest, Hungary in 1944, at the request of the United States, to save the lives of as many Jews in Hungary as possible. At a risk to his own life, he established "Swedish Houses" where people could live and get some protection from the Swedish government which was neutral in the war. Mr. Wallenberg housed, fed and protected thousands of Jews. He created a set of "Swedish Passports" that fooled the Nazis and saved many from deportation to the extermination camps.

At the risk to his own life, he even went directly to cattle cars filled with people and to actual "death marches" to fight with Nazi Officers to rescue people. Other countries began to copy his ideas, saving thousands of people. His life will help the students understand how people should live their lives together and how citizens can support the proper use of authority to combat the abuse of political power. Raoul Wallenberg and thousands of others risked their lives to



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save Jews and other people who were not only being treated unfairly by the Nazi regime during World War II, but were the victims of genocide¹.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary focuses on the Key Term for Grades 5 through 7²:

- Justice
- Political systems
- Authority
- Citizenship
- Civic values
- Civil rights
- Democracy
- Individual rights to life
- Respect for minority rights
- Power
- Ethnic group
- Genocide
- Adolf Hitler
- Human rights
- Holocaust
- Jews
- Nazi Germany
- Religion
- Values
- Terrorism
- World War II

In addition, there will be others such as: anti-Semitism, prejudice and diplomatic, and other vocabulary terms related to the presentation.

¹ A complete biography of Raoul Wallenberg is enclosed at the end.

² A separate list of vocabulary words and their definitions is enclosed at the end.



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Middle School Outcomes

Your students will:

- Value the principles, ideals, and core values of the American democratic system based upon the premises of human dignity, liberty, justice, and equality by comparing them to the treatment of the Jews and others during the Holocaust.

High School Outcomes

Your students will:

- Analyze the disparities between civic values expressed in the United States Constitution and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the realities as evidenced in the political, social, and economic life in the United States and throughout the world (and during the Holocaust); and
- Identify, respect, and model those core civic values inherent in our founding documents that have been forces for unity in American society by comparing them to the treatment of the Jews and others during the Holocaust.



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THE PROGRAM

Part One – 45 minutes - Slides Presentation

The presentation begins with the students' concept of a hero as someone with super powers. It then leads to a discussion of ordinary people who do "heroic" things. It puts Raoul Wallenberg's heroic deeds into a geographic and historical context. The slides included in the presentation can be used in many ways. It is not expected that you will teach all of the concepts in 45 minutes. They can be an introduction to many other issues.

Suggested Questions

- What is your idea of a Super hero? Let's list some super heroes that you know.
- What are the characteristics of a Hero?
- Do you think that anybody can be a Hero? Why or Why not?
- What were the values of Nazi Germany and how did they affect the human and civil rights of their citizens?
- Why did the US ask Sweden to help the Jews in Hungary?
- Why was Sweden willing to help?
- Why do you think Raoul Wallenberg volunteered to go to Hungary?
- What do you think of Wallenberg's idea to create passports of protection?
- Can you think of other ideas to save lives?
- Why do you think so many people are trying to find out what happened to Wallenberg?
- What are the values of a democracy?
- What makes Raoul Wallenberg a hero?
- Can someone be a hero in other ways than save people's lives?
- Do you know of other people who are or were heroes in the same way?
- Have you ever done anything heroic?
- Do you think you could do something that respects the values of our democracy?

Part Two – 45 minutes - Testimonials

The class will be divided into 4 or 5 groups (depending on class size) to read and discuss testimony written by an actual survivor saved by Raoul Wallenberg. A list



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of suggested questions to guide the discussion is included. In addition each student within a group could be assigned the task of taking notes and being ready to summarize the discussion for the whole class.

After the group discussions, each group will share the answers to the questions and their reactions to the assigned testimony with the rest of the class. They then could share their own personal every day heroic experiences or other heroes they have known or read about.

Suggested Questions

- Do you think heroes like Wallenberg exist today? Do you know someone you can call a hero? What makes this person a Hero?
- Many other representatives of governments saved lives even though their governments forbade them to. Would you disobey orders from your bosses or those in authority if they seemed wrong to you?

TESTIMONIALS

The following testimonials were written by real people saved by Wallenberg. Here is a list of suggested questions your students might think about for all of the testimonies³.

1. What was life like for the person writing the testimony?
2. Was he or she living in a democracy? How can you tell?
3. How did the Nazi rule affect her/him and the family?
4. Why do you think Wallenberg did what he did to save these people?
5. Was this an act of heroism?
6. Would these individuals been a victim of genocide if Raoul Wallenberg had not helped?
7. Why were they targeted for genocide?
8. Why didn't the Jews leave Hungary when they realized things were bad?
9. How did people survive in the ghetto when they had to give up their professions and livelihoods?
10. Why didn't they fight back?
11. Have we ever seen treatment like this in the United States?

³ Many of the general and specific questions were recommended by teachers participating in a workshop.



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12. Why do you think people would treat others this way?
13. Why did these people share their family's story with us?
14. Who was the hero in this story? Why?
15. Do people choose to be heroes?
16. Why would someone put themselves out when they won't get something in return?
17. Why do people react differently to the same situation?
18. Do you know any other people who are or were heroes in the same way as Wallenberg?
19. Would you risk your life to save other people?
20. What would you do to save yourself or your family?
21. Have you ever done something you were ashamed of? What did you do to change this?

Testimony of George Boros: Saving My Mother

After the war whenever two or more survivors of the Holocaust got together, they asked, "What is your story?" "How did you survive?" Everybody had his own "miracle" which was more exciting than any action movie. I myself was captured 11 times by the Hungarian Nazis and went from one hiding place to another until I was liberated by a Russian soldier.

This is the story of how my mother was saved. It was November 27, 1944 in Budapest Hungary. It was my parents' wedding anniversary and I was 14 years old. My parents and I were living in a special house set up by Raoul Wallenberg to protect us from the Nazis when suddenly we were herded together by the Nazis and sent to the unused Budapest Brick Factory. All of our valuables were taken – my parents' wedding rings. At the Brick Factory, my mother and my father were selected to go on a "death march" towards Germany where they would be killed if they survived the march. I was selected to go to the Budapest Ghetto where all Jews in Budapest had to live, which meant that I might live.

We were desperate. I noticed a man arguing with the Hungarian Nazis and guards. This was Raoul Wallenberg. He told the guards that all women over the age of 40 must be allowed to go to the Ghetto rather than be forced to go on the death march. My mother was only 39 and looked about 25. I ran to Wallenberg and begged him for help. The guards asked for my mother's papers, but Wallenberg interrupted and said, "I know this lady. She was a guest in our house in Sweden and she is over 40." My mother was saved and was sent to the Ghetto.



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It was because of Raoul Wallenberg that my mother survived. My father, a very courageous man, escaped from the death march after walking a few miles with them. Later, my mother, father and I went to Canada and lived there for the rest of our lives. When I got married I had a son and we named him Raoul.

Specific Suggested Questions for George Boros Testimony

1. Was it alright for Wallenberg to lie to the guards? Why?
2. What do you think would have happened to Wallenberg if he was caught in his lie?
3. What is the difference between a ghetto and the "death march"?
4. Why were these people rounded up and put in the Brick Factory?
5. Why were the guards willing to listen to Wallenberg?
6. Why do you think Wallenberg could not help George's father?
7. How do you think the father was able to escape?
8. Why did this family end up in Canada?

Testimony of Andrew Fuchs

This is a sad little story of a sad little child, who lost his parents in inhuman conditions. I was 8 years old in 1944. I was born and lived in Hungary. I remember only a few mental images of that terrible period. After all, I was only 8 years old.

I lived with my parents and my sister. My parents were merchants – they sold things. Like all Jews at this time, we were forced by the authorities to always wear the yellow star sewn onto our clothes so that everybody would know that we were Jews. All Jews were treated unfairly just because they were Jews. The authorities took all radios from every Jewish home. These actions and others were meant to isolate and later murder all of the Jews.

Up until this time, we lived in a town outside of Budapest. Then the Hungarian Nazis, made us leave our town. We were sent to housing that was only for Jews in Budapest. Later, we suddenly had to leave even these houses.

I can still remember that awful time. We were forced to march with our hands up in the air. Large crowds of hateful people watched and sneered. One person even spat at me – an 8 year old! We were herded like animals into a synagogue. I believe we were to be sent to a concentration camp.



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That is when I saw Raoul Wallenberg. He rescued my family and other people, by convincing the Nazis to let him take my family and others back to our designated houses.

Later, a law was passed which said that all Jews between the ages of 16 to 50 or 60 must be sent to concentration camps. My parents were hauled away. I never saw them again. I was all alone.

Raoul Wallenberg came to save me and the other children who had been left behind and alone. Raoul risked his own life to save all of the children. He took us to different places to hide. We had to keep moving every 2 days afraid we would be found. Some non-Jewish Hungarians helped to hide us. All of these people were also risking their own lives. I was terrified.

Raoul told the authorities that we were protected under the Swedish government. Raoul tried to leave us with a group of older Jews but the Hungarian Nazis found us. Even though we were "protected," the Nazis did many cruel things to me and the other children. They pretended that they were going to execute us by lining us up in front of a wall and then left us standing. We were terrorized. Once, they poured cold water over me because I fell asleep while standing at the wall. I saw many elderly men murdered. When Raoul found out about what was happening, he started to move us around again from place to place. Finally, he took us to a building that was supposed to be safe but it wasn't safe either. The Hungarian Nazis found us and continued harassing and terrorizing us. I saw a group of teenagers, who were caught trying to escape, executed. Fortunately, some of us did manage to leave this horrible place. The Soviet Army finally liberated us.

Raoul Wallenberg was a truly righteous person. Without his help, I would not be alive today.

Specific Suggested Questions for Andrew Fuchs Testimony

1. How do children feel when they are separated from their parents? How might you feel?
2. How can you relate this story to an 8 year old boy enslaved in the United States?
3. Why do you think the radios were removed from all the homes?
4. What if all of your electronic media were removed from your home?



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5. Why do you think individuals between the ages of 16-50 were chosen to go to concentration camps?
6. Describe how you would feel if your parents were taken from you when you were 8.
7. Why do you think Wallenberg could not save Andrew's parents in the end?

Testimony of Marianne Vaney

I was born in Hungary. In 1933, at the age of 7 we moved to Budapest. We were very poor. By 1938, there were many political changes. The first law against the Jews was passed. Adolf Hitler promised to get back territories Hungary lost in World War I if Hungary agreed to eliminate Jews from all economic life and public life. Soon other laws passed. Restrictions against Jewish and Christian marriages were put into place.

In 1942 at the age of 19, I received my teaching certificate, but since I was not allowed to teach at a state school because I was Jewish, I took a part-time job in an adult education college. I did not make much money.

Things went on that way until the morning of March 19, 1944. I was woken up by a phone call from a neighbor. He said, "The Germans have entered Hungary. Don't leave the house." Later in the afternoon he came to tell us not to go near any of the railway stations because German soldiers were arresting Jews. The Germans had help from the Hungarian authorities.

Things quickly changed for the worse. It was decided that all Jews had to be moved to a Ghetto where they would live together in "Jewish Houses". No Jews could be out during the hours of 6 PM in the evening to 7 AM in the morning. All Jews had to wear a yellow star sewn into their clothes and wear it at all times so they could be identified. Jews were not permitted to be lawyers or doctors and Jews were not allowed to work in Christian firms. They had to give up their cars.

Because I needed a job, I agreed to work with the Jewish Council to count the number of Jews and select the houses they would live in the Ghetto. I was ashamed of this work. So, I decided to leave. I told them I had health problems.

At this time I lived in one of the Jewish Houses with my parents. I found out that there was a man named Raoul Wallenberg who was trying to save Jews. I went to his office to ask for a job. I was hired as a typist. Wallenberg created "passports" to protect people who were being sent to concentration camps. As



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a typist, it was my job to type names on these documents that would protect people from being sent to concentration camps. I often worked late into the night.

In addition to creating these documents, Wallenberg actually put his life in danger by going to the Austro-Hungarian border several times to save people before they would be lost forever. He went there to bring people back. Once or twice I had to go to the railway station to receive the people that Wallenberg saved to help them get to the protective houses that Wallenberg had set up. Their state of health was unimaginable. They suffered from dysentery, exhaustion and shock. I had never seen anything like it before.

Wallenberg was never afraid to risk his own life. There were several plots to kill him. He remained fearless and continued to do his job. He worked to save Jewish lives not matter how dangerous his job was. He also argued with the German troops and stopped them from blowing up the Jewish Ghetto and killing the remaining Jews.

My parents and I survived because Wallenberg protected us. I am alive today to tell my story.

Specific Suggested Questions for Marianne Vaney Testimony

1. Were the people who held jobs in the government betrayers or survivors?
2. How did the Hungarian government affect Marianne's life before the occupation of the Germans?
3. How did German occupation change things?
4. Why do you think were Marianne and others willing to risk their lives working for Wallenberg?
5. Do you think that you would want to work with someone like Raoul? Why or why not?
6. Was Marianne a hero? Why or why not?



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FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

Possible Follow up Activities Related to Raoul Wallenberg

- Students can write an essay on Wallenberg's story focusing on his commitment to the values of a democracy.
- Students can write a fictionalized testimony as if Raoul Wallenberg had saved them.
- Each student or group of students can create a comic book with Wallenberg or others as the Hero.
- Students in an art class can do a portrait of Wallenberg or others using different techniques such as painting, drawing and collage.
- Students can write a poem or the lyrics of a song dedicated to Raoul Wallenberg.
- The school can organize a contest in order to select the best portrait, essay or song written in honor to Wallenberg.
- The school can put together a display of Wallenberg's portraits, essays and songs produced by the students.
- Screening of the documentary film "Raoul Wallenberg: Buried Alive", followed by the testimony of people who worked with or were saved by Raoul Wallenberg.
- Visit to the Museum of the Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.
- The School can organize a play based on Wallenberg story to be performed at the end of the year.
- Student Action:

Students can help gather signatures for a world wide campaign started by the Wallenberg Foundation. The campaign is aimed at getting signatures on a petition to definitively discover Raoul Wallenberg's final destiny. It hopes to gather 100,000 names for the 100,000 lives Wallenberg



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saved in Budapest. The collected signatures will be presented before the UN. See <http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/?en/news/2018.htm>.

Possible Activities Related to Current, Past or Recent World Events:

- Students can do some research on other heroes

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
Myanmar (Burma)



Wangari Maathai - Kenya
Winner of 2004 Nobel Peace Prize



Shirin Ebadi – Iran
Winner of 2003 Nobel Peace Prize



Martin Luther King, Jr.





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Susan B. Anthony



Harriet Tubman



Andrew Goodman, James Earl Chaney and Michael Schwerner
(three civil rights workers killed in Mississippi in 1964)



Paul Rusesabagina
(Real life hero of "Hotel Rwanda"
the movie)



Christopher Reeve



Others saviors of the Holocaust such as
Angelo Roncalli, Sousa Mendes and
Carl Lutz



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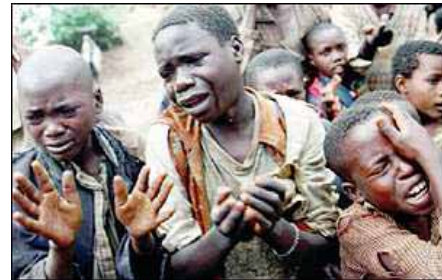
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- Students can conduct research on current or recent genocides: Rwanda, Darfur and Cambodia.
-

DARFUR



RWANDA



CAMBODIA



- Students can conduct research on the genocide trial of Saddam Hussein.





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RESOURCES

The Wallenberg Foundation offers the following help:

- An individual can be sent to present the program if you wish
- Portraits of Wallenberg
- Examples of songs dedicated to Wallenberg
- A individual who has survived the Holocaust can speak to students of his/her experience

Films

- "Raoul Wallenberg: Buried Alive". Dir. David Harel. Documentary. 1983.
- "Raoul Wallenberg: Between the Lines". Dir. Karin Altmann. Documentary. 1991.
- "Wallenberg: A Hero's Story". Dir. Lamont Johnson. Telefilm. 1985.
- "Shoa". Dir. Claude Lanzmann. Documentary, 1984.
- "Schindler's List". Dir. Steven Spielberg. Feature film based on a real story. 1994.
- "Into the Arms of Strangers". Dir. Mark Jonathan Harris. Documentary. 2000.

Websites

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- Jewish Virtual Library, www.us-israel.org
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- Museum of the Jewish Heritage, www.mjhnyc.org
- Historica, www.histori.ca
- The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, www.jfr.org
- UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, www.udhr.org/history/default.htm

Books

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- Gersten, Alan. **A Conspiracy of Indifference: The Raoul Wallenberg Story**. Pennsylvania: Xlibris Corporation, June 2001.



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Books for Children

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For an extended list of bibliography. please visit
<http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/?en/wallenberg/944.htm>



VOCABULARY DEFINITIONS

Adolf Hitler: Austrian-born founder of the German Nazi Party and chancellor of the Third Reich, who ruled as an absolute dictator. (1933-1945). His evil regime was known for the extermination of millions of people, especially European Jews.

Authority: The power to carry out laws, command, determine, or judge; one that has power, especially a government or body of government officials.

Citizen: A resident of a city or town, especially one entitled to vote and enjoy other privileges there.

Citizenship: The position of a citizen with its duties, rights, and privileges.

Civic values: Values relating to, or belonging to a city, a citizen, or citizenship; municipal or civil.

Civil rights: The rights belonging to a citizen, such as civil liberties, due process, equal protection of the laws, and freedom from discrimination.

Democracy: Government ruled by the people.

Ethnic group: People of the same race or nationality who share a culture.

Genocide: The systematic and planned extermination of an entire national, racial, political, or ethnic group.

Hero: A man of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities. A person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal.

Holocaust: The genocide of European Jews and others by the Nazis during World War II.

Human rights: The basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.



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Ideology: A set of doctrines or beliefs that form the basis of a political, economic, or other system.

Individual rights to life: One of the principals upon which democracy is based.

Jews: One who practices the religion of Judaism, having its spiritual and ethical principles based upon the Hebrew Scriptures and the Talmud.

Justice: The quality of being just; fairness.

Nazi Germany: The Nazi dictatorship under Hitler (1933-1945).

Political systems: The members of a social organization who are in power.

Power: The might of a nation, political organization, or similar group.

Religion: A set of beliefs, values, and practices based upon a belief in a creator of the universe.

Respect for minority rights: One of the principals upon which democracy is based.

Terrorism: The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a person or an organized group against people or property with the intention of frightening or forcing societies or governments, into action, often for ideological or political reasons.

Values: A principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable.

World War II: A war fought from 1939 to 1945, in which Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States, China, and other allies defeated Germany, Italy, and Japan.



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Raoul Wallenberg's Biography

By Jan Larsson*

Foreword

By now, people in most parts of the world have heard about Raoul Wallenberg's extraordinary rescue action on behalf of the Hungarian Jews during World War II. Recent documentaries about him, produced in a number of countries, have contributed to public awareness of his role. But the 1985 American TV miniseries "Wallenberg," which has been seen by many millions of people all over the globe, has been particularly important in this regard.

During my lecture tours both in Sweden and abroad as part of the international effort to secure Raoul's release from the Soviet Union, I have often been asked how it was possible to save such a large number of people-about 100,000-from the Nazi executions. The most important answer: Raoul Wallenberg was the right man in the right place, given the situation then prevailing. Although he was not the heroic type in the ordinary sense, he was a fearless, skilled negotiator and organizer. He was, moreover, a good actor, a talent that served him well during his clashes with the Nazis. He could also show two different personalities. The first was the calm, humorous, intellectual, warm person that we co-workers could see. The second was Raoul Wallenberg in confrontation with the Nazis: he was transformed into an aggressive person who would shout at them or threaten them on one occasion, flatter or bribe them on another, as the circumstances required. They were impressed by him and usually gave in to his demands. One reason, of course, was his Swedish diplomatic status, which the Germans did not dare to violate.

The fact is that neither Raoul nor we, his co-workers, at first had any idea that his rescue action would eventually grow to such a large scale.

Raoul was forced to play for increasingly high stakes in a situation where Budapest was becoming more and more of a battlefield. The bombs were raining down, and Soviet troops were closing in on the suburbs. The last time I saw Raoul Wallenberg (on January 10, 1945) I urged him to seek shelter, especially given the fact that the Arrow Cross-the Hungarian Nazis-were searching for him in particular and that he was consequently taking a major risk by continuing his humanitarian work.

His reply was typical: "To me there's no other choice. I've accepted this assignment and I could never return to Stockholm without the knowledge that I'd done everything in human power to save as many Jews as possible."

And he continued doing so until he himself was captured-not by the Nazis, but by the Soviet Army.

Foreword by Ambassador Per Anger*

In Jerusalem there is a memorial to the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis during World War II. It is called Yad Vashem and was erected in 1953. A street called "Avenue of the Righteous" runs through the area. A steady breeze blows through the leaves of the 600 trees that line the street



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in straight rows. They were all planted to honor the memory of non-Jewish individuals who risked their lives to save the Jews from the Nazi executioners.

One of these trees bears the name of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swede.

There are different versions as to the number of Jews in Budapest that Raoul Wallenberg saved. Some sources credit him with having saved 30,000 people. According to other estimates, the number of people who can directly or indirectly thank Wallenberg for their lives is around 100,000. Regardless of what figure is the correct one, Raoul Wallenberg is undoubtedly one of the foremost heroes of World War II.

Wallenberg did not, however, return home to Sweden as a hero when the war ended. Instead he was arrested by the Soviet troops who were marching into Budapest. The Soviet government has declared time and again that he is dead. Just as many times, however, new witnesses have appeared who have claimed that Raoul Wallenberg is-or was-still alive somewhere in a Soviet prison or mental hospital.

Raoul Wallenberg is-or was-a member of one of Sweden's most prominent families. The Wallenbergs have given their country several generations of leading bankers, diplomats and statesmen. Raoul's father, Raoul Oscar Wallenberg, was a naval officer and a cousin of Jacob and Marcus Wallenberg, two of Sweden's best-known financiers and industrialists during the half century beginning around 1930. Raoul was born on August 4, 1912, three months after his father's death. His mother, Maj Wising Wallenberg, married again in 1918, this time to Fredrik von Dardel.

Raoul's paternal grandfather, Gustav Wallenberg, took charge of Raoul's education. The plan was that he would follow the family tradition and go into banking, but he turned out to be more interested in architecture and trade.

In 1930 Raoul Wallenberg completed upper secondary school, having earned top marks in Russian and in drawing. After doing his compulsory military service, in 1931 he traveled to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to study architecture. In 1935 he received a Bachelor of Science degree and returned home. But the market for architects in Sweden was small. Instead, his grandfather sent him to Cape Town, South Africa, where he became a trainee in a Swedish firm that sold building materials. After six months, his grandfather arranged another job for Raoul at the branch office of a Dutch bank in Haifa, Palestine (in what is now Israel).

In Palestine, he came into contact for the first time with Jews who had fled from Hitler's Germany. Their stories about Nazi persecution stirred him deeply. Perhaps not only because he had a very humane attitude toward life, but also because he himself had a few drops of Jewish blood. After returning to Sweden from Haifa in 1936, Raoul Wallenberg did not continue in banking, but instead resumed his old interest in international trade.

Through Jacob Wallenberg's network of contacts in the business world, he was eventually introduced to a Hungarian Jew, Koloman Lauer, who ran a Swedish-based import and export firm specializing in foodstuffs.



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Because Raoul Wallenberg had a good feeling for languages and could travel freely around Europe, he was a perfect business partner for Lauer. Within eight months, Raoul Wallenberg was a major shareholder and the international manager of the firm.

His travels to Nazi-occupied France, and to Germany itself, soon taught Raoul Wallenberg how the German bureaucracy operated. He had also made numerous trips to Hungary, where he visited Lauer's family in Budapest. Hungary was still a relatively safe place, though surrounded by enemies.

Background to Raoul Wallenberg's Mission

By the spring of 1944 the world had awakened and now realized what Hitler's "final solution of the Jewish problem" actually meant. Bits of information about the Nazi death camps had begun to leak out as early as 1942, but were considered so incredible that at first they were not taken seriously by some Allied leaders. But in May 1944 the first authentic eyewitness accounts of what was actually happening at the Auschwitz concentration camp reached the Allies.

Hitler's plans for the annihilation of the entire Jewish population in German-occupied countries became widely known. Hungary, which had joined forces with Germany in its war against the Soviet Union beginning in 1941, still had about 700,000 Jewish residents as of early 1944.

When the Germans lost the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943, Hungary wanted to follow the example of Italy and ask for a separate peace. At that point, Hitler summoned the Hungarian head of state, Miklós Horthy, and demanded continued solidarity with Germany. When Horthy refused to accept these demands, Hitler ordered the occupation of Hungary, which began on March 19, 1944. Soon the deportation trains began carrying Hungarian Jews out of their country to the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps in southern Poland, where certain death awaited them.

The Germans began by shipping out Jews from the Hungarian countryside. But the Jewish inhabitants of Budapest knew that their fateful turn would soon come. In desperation, many of them sought help from the embassies of neutral states. The embassies issued temporary passports to Jews who had special ties with these countries.

The Swedish Legation in Budapest managed to persuade the Hungarian authorities to treat the holders of such temporary passports which it had issued as if they were Swedish citizens. They were thus exempted from having to wear the Star of David that identified them as Jews. In a short time, the Legation issued 700 passports—a drop in the ocean compared with the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were in danger of deportation. The Swedish Legation requested that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm send more staff immediately.

Meanwhile, the World Jewish Congress was holding a meeting in Stockholm. The most important item on its agenda was to organize a rescue action for the Hungarian Jews.

In 1944 the United States had established the War Refugee Board (WRB), an organization whose task was to save Jews from Nazi persecution. The WRB soon found out that the Swedes were making serious attempts to save Jews in Hungary. The WRB's Stockholm representative



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summoned a group of prominent Swedish Jews to discuss names of suitable people who could travel to Budapest and initiate a major rescue action. Among the participants was Raoul Wallenberg's business partner, Koloman Lauer, who served the group as an expert on Hungary.

The group's first choice was Folke Bernadotte, chairman of the Swedish Red Cross and a relative of the King Gustav V. When Bernadotte was not approved by the Hungarian government, Koloman Lauer suggested that his own business colleague, Raoul Wallenberg, be approached. Lauer particularly emphasized that Wallenberg had already made many trips to Hungary while working for their jointly owned company. Some members of the group objected that Raoul was too young and appeared to be inexperienced, but Lauer persisted. Raoul was the right man, he argued-quick-thinking, energetic, courageous and empathetic. Besides, he had a well-known name.

Soon everyone in the group had approved the idea of approaching Raoul Wallenberg, who accepted the offer. By late June 1944, he had been appointed first secretary of the Swedish diplomatic mission in Budapest. His brief was to initiate a rescue action for the Jews. Raoul was very eager to travel to Budapest, but first he wrote a memo to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He was determined not to let himself be buried in diplomatic protocol and bureaucracy.

He requested full authority to deal with anyone he wanted, without first clearing the matter with the Swedish ambassador in Budapest. He also wanted the right to use diplomatic couriers outside of normal channels.

His memo was so unusual that the matter was referred all the way up to Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson, who consulted with King Gustav V before informing Wallenberg that his conditions had been accepted.

Wallenberg's Rescue Actions

When Raoul Wallenberg arrived in Budapest in July 1944, time was already running out. Under the direction of Adolf Eichmann, the Germans had deported more than 400,000 Jewish men, women and children. They had been transported out of Hungary in 148 freight trains between May 14 and July 8. When Wallenberg got to Budapest, there were only about 200,000 Jews left in the capital.

Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann was now preparing a plan to wipe out the entire Jewish population of Budapest within a 24-hour period. In a report to Berlin, he had written that "the technical details will take a few days."

If this plan had been carried out, Raoul Wallenberg's trip would have been in vain. Eichmann would have implemented a "permanent solution of the Jewish problem" in Hungary. But the head of state, Miklós Horthy, received a letter from King Gustav V of Sweden containing an appeal to stop the deportations of Jews. Horthy summoned his courage. He sent a note to King Gustav V saying he had done everything in his power to assure that the principles of humanity and justice would be respected. The German deportations were cancelled. A train carrying 1,600 Jews was stopped at the border and sent back to Budapest.



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Amazingly, the Germans approved the halt in the deportations. The reason may be that during this period one of the top Nazi leaders, Heinrich Himmler, was playing a high-stake game. Germany was losing the war. Himmler apparently believed he could negotiate a separate peace with the Western Allies. He may have hoped that he could improve his negotiating position by reducing pressure on the Jews. So in Hungary, Adolf Eichmann could do nothing but bide his time.

The head of the Swedish Legation in Budapest at the time was Minister Carl Ivar Danielsson. His closest deputy was Legation Secretary Per Anger.

Raoul Wallenberg became head of a special department, which was in charge of helping the Jews. Even before Wallenberg arrived, Valdemar Langlet, leader of the Swedish Red Cross, was assisting the Swedish Legation. Langlet rented buildings in the name of the Red Cross and put up signs such as "Swedish Library" and "Swedish Research Institute" on their doors. These buildings were then used as hiding places for Jews.

Wallenberg did not use traditional diplomacy. He more or less shocked the other diplomats at the Swedish Legation with his unconventional methods. He successfully used everything from bribery to threats of blackmail. But when the other members of the Legation staff saw the results of Wallenberg's efforts, he quickly gained their full support.

Raoul Wallenberg's first task was to design a Swedish protective passport to help the Jews in their dealings with the Germans and the Hungarians. Wallenberg had previously learned that the German and Hungarian bureaucracies had a weakness for external symbolism. So he had the passports attractively printed in blue and yellow (Sweden's national colors) with the Three Crowns coat of arms in the middle, and he furnished them with the appropriate stamps and signatures. Of course Wallenberg's protective passports had no value whatever under international law, but they commanded the respect of those they were designed to influence. At first Wallenberg only had permission to issue 1,500 such passports. But he managed to persuade the Hungarian authorities to let him issue another 1,000, and through promises and empty threats to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry he eventually managed to get the quota raised to 4,500 protective passports.

In reality, Wallenberg managed to issue more than three times this many protective passports. His staff grew to several hundred people. They were all Jews, but by working for Wallenberg they were exempted from wearing the demeaning Star of David.

In August 1944 the Hungarian head of state, Horthy, dismissed his pro-German prime minister, Sztójay, and appointed General Lakatos to succeed him. The situation of the Jews improved substantially. Because of diplomatic pressure-orchestrated and greatly amplified by Raoul Wallenberg-Adolf Eichmann lost his position of responsibility for "solving the Hungarian Jewish issue."

Wallenberg now thought that his department at the Legation could be phased out and that he himself could return to Sweden. He believed that the Soviet troops who were successfully invading Hungary would soon march into Budapest.



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On October 15 Miklós Horthy announced that he was seeking a separate peace with the Russians. But his radio speech had hardly been broadcast before the German troops took command. Horthy was immediately deposed and was replaced by the leader of the Hungarian Nazis, Ferenc Szálasi. He was leader of the Arrow Cross movement, which was feared at least as much as the German Nazis for its cruel methods in dealing with the Jews. Adolf Eichmann returned and was given a completely free hand to resume his previous terror campaign against the Jews.

But Raoul Wallenberg struggled indefatigably against the authorities and frequently showed up as an unwelcome witness to their atrocities. In many cases he managed to save his own Jewish co-workers from the hands of the executioners-his only weapons were his courage and firm demeanor.

Now Raoul Wallenberg began to expand the "Swedish houses." These were more than thirty buildings in the Pest district where Jews could seek shelter. A Swedish flag hung outside the door of each, and Wallenberg declared the building Swedish territory. The number of inhabitants of the "Swedish houses" soon climbed to 15,000.

The other neutral diplomatic missions in Budapest began to follow Wallenberg's example by issuing protective passports. A number of diplomats from other countries were inspired to open their own "safe houses" for Jewish refugees.

Toward the end of the war, when conditions were totally desperate, Wallenberg issued a simplified version of his protective passport, a mimeographed page that bore only his signature. In the prevailing chaos, even this worked.

Immediately after its installation, the new Hungarian Nazi government announced that all protective passports were invalid. But Wallenberg managed to make the acquaintance of Baroness Elizabeth "Liesel" Kemény. She was the wife of the foreign minister, and with her assistance Wallenberg managed to have his protective passports reinstated.

While this was going on, Eichmann began his brutal death marches. He carried out his promised deportation program by forcing large contingents of Jews to leave Hungary by foot. The first march began on November 20, 1944, and conditions along the 200 km (120 mi.) route between Budapest and the Austrian border were so appalling that even some Nazis protested.

Thousands of Jews marched in endless columns, hungry and in great suffering. Raoul Wallenberg stayed with them continuously, distributing protective passports, food and medicine. He alternately threatened and bribed the Nazis until he managed to secure the release of those who had been given his Swedish passports.

When Eichmann began shipping out the Hungarian Jews in whole trainloads, Wallenberg intensified his rescue actions. As the freight cars full of Jews stood in the station, he would even climb on top of them, run along the roof of the cars and hand bundles of protective passports to their occupants. On one occasion German soldiers were ordered to shoot him, but were so impressed by Wallenberg's courage that they deliberately aimed too high. He was then able to



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jump down unharmed and demand that those Jews who had received his protective passports be allowed to leave the train and return to the city with him.

Raoul Wallenberg's department at the Swedish Legation grew continuously, employing 340 people in the end. An additional 700 people also lived in the department's offices.

Toward the end of 1944 Wallenberg had moved his operations across the Danube from Buda to the Pest district, where the two Jewish ghettos were located. The minimal law and order that had previously existed were now gone. The Arrow Cross movement, the police and the German armed forces shared power in an uneasy alliance.

Wallenberg searched desperately for suitable people who could be bribed, and he found a very powerful ally in Pa'l Szalay, a high-ranking officer in the police force who also belonged to the Arrow Cross. After the war, Szalay was the only highly placed Arrow Cross member not executed. Instead he was released in recognition of his efforts together with Wallenberg to protect the Jews.

During the second week of January 1945, Raoul Wallenberg learned that Eichmann was about to set in motion a total massacre of the Jews living in Budapest's larger ghetto. The only person who could prevent it was General August Schmidhuber, commander of the German troops in Hungary.

Wallenberg's ally Szalay was sent to find Schmidhuber and hand over a note which declared that Raoul Wallenberg would make sure that the general would be held personally responsible for the massacre and that he would be hanged as a war criminal after the war. The massacre was cancelled at the last minute as a result of Raoul Wallenberg's intervention.

Two days later, the Russians arrived and found 97,000 Jews alive in the two Budapest ghettos. This brought to 120,000 the total number of Jews who had survived the Nazi efforts to exterminate them in Hungary.

According to Per Anger, Wallenberg's friend and colleague, Wallenberg must be given credit for having saved about 100,000 Jews.

What happened to Raoul Wallenberg?

On January 13, 1945, the advancing Soviet troops saw a man standing and waiting for them alone outside a building with a large Swedish flag above its door. Raoul Wallenberg told an amazed Soviet sergeant in fluent Russian that he was the Swedish chargé d'affaires for the portions of Hungary liberated by the Soviets. Wallenberg received permission to visit Soviet military headquarters in Debrecen, east of Budapest. On his way out of the capital on January 17, Wallenberg and his chauffeur-with a Soviet escort-stopped at the "Swedish houses," where he said goodbye to his friends. He told one colleague, Dr. Ernö Petö, that he was not sure whether he would be the guest of the Soviets or their prisoner. Raoul Wallenberg thought he would be back within a week-but he never returned.



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It is unclear whether Raoul Wallenberg is alive or not. The Russians themselves claim that he died in a Soviet prison on July 17, 1947. There are, however, indications from innumerable witnesses that he may still be alive even today.

Before we discuss Raoul Wallenberg's imprisonment, we must find out two things. First, why he wanted to establish contact with the Russians in Debrecen. And second, why they arrested him.

In November 1944 Raoul Wallenberg had set up a section in his department which, under his supervision, would write a detailed economic relief plan for the surviving Jews. The Russians did not have the same attitude toward the Jews and were probably incapable of understanding a person who had devoted all his energies to saving them. Wallenberg thus considered it important to meet with the Soviet commanders and explain his humanitarian work to them.

The Soviets probably thought that Wallenberg's work had some ulterior motive. They presumably also suspected him of being an American agent. They were certainly also very skeptical of Raoul Wallenberg's contacts with the Germans.

Wallenberg and his chauffeur Vilmos Langfelder never returned from Debrecen. According to reliable witnesses, they were arrested and taken to Moscow. They were jailed by the NKVD, an organization now known as the KGB. According to eyewitnesses, Wallenberg and Langfelder were placed in separate cells at the Lyublyanka prison.

But Wallenberg was not the only diplomat in Budapest who aroused Soviet suspicions. The Swiss Legation, too, had carried out extensive work to help Hungary's Jews. The Russians arrested a legation secretary there, along with a legation office worker, and took them to the then Soviet Union. The Swiss nevertheless managed to have them exchanged for Soviet citizens who had been detained in Switzerland.

But it took a while before people in Stockholm became worried about Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance. In a letter to the Swedish ambassador to Moscow, Deputy Foreign Minister Dekanosov declared that "Soviet military authorities have taken steps to protect Wallenberg and his possessions."

The Swedes naturally expected Raoul Wallenberg to come home soon. When nothing happened, Raoul's mother Maj von Dardel contacted the Soviet ambassador in Stockholm, Aleksandra Kollontai, who told her she could rest assured that her son was in safe hands in the Soviet Union. Around the same time, Madame Kollontai told the wife of Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Christian Günther that it was in Wallenberg's best interests if the Swedish government did not make a big fuss about him. But Aleksandra Kollontai was recalled to Russia, and the matter took a new turn.

On March 8, 1945, the Soviet-controlled Hungarian radio announced that Raoul Wallenberg had been murdered on the way to Debrecen, probably by Hungarian Nazis or Gestapo agents. This created a certain passivity on the part of the Swedish government. The new minister for foreign affairs, Östen Undén, and the Swedish ambassador in Moscow assumed that Raoul Wallenberg was dead. Most people did not, however, take the radio announcement seriously.



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Many observers have drawn the conclusion that immediately after the war, Sweden had a chance to negotiate Wallenberg's release but that the Swedes missed their chance.

In 1965 Sweden's then prime minister, Tage Erlander, made a speech which is included in a collection of documents concerning efforts to track down Raoul Wallenberg. Erlander declared that all attempts to find Wallenberg directly after the war had led nowhere. In fact, Soviet authorities even denied any knowledge of Wallenberg. According to Erlander, between 1947 and 1951 nothing new of any importance occurred. But as foreign prisoners began to be released from Soviet prisons, many new bits of testimony about Raoul Wallenberg's fate after January 1945 came to light.

In April 1956 Prime Minister Tage Erlander and Interior Minister Gunnar Hedlund traveled to Moscow, where they met with top Soviet representatives including Nikita Khrushchev, Nikolaj Bulganin and Vjatjeslav Molotov. The Russians promised to investigate once again what had happened to Raoul Wallenberg.

On February 6, 1957, the Soviets announced that they had made extensive inquiries and had located a document which probably concerned Raoul Wallenberg. The handwritten document stated that "the prisoner Wallenberg, who is known to you, died last night in his cell." The document was dated July 17, 1947, and was signed Smoltsov, head of the Lyublyanka prison infirmary. The document was addressed to Abakumov, Soviet minister of state security.

The Russians said in their letter to the Swedes that unfortunately Smoltsov had died in May 1953 and that Abakumov had been executed in connection with purges within the security police. The Swedes were very suspicious of this message, but the Russians have stuck to their version to this very day.

According to testimony from various people who served time in Soviet prisons after January 1945, Raoul Wallenberg was imprisoned throughout the 1950s. This of course contradicts the Soviet government's version.

In 1965 the Swedish government published a new official report on the Raoul Wallenberg case. It had previously published a report in 1957. According to the new report, the prime minister, Tage Erlander had done everything in his power to find out the truth about Wallenberg.

The Wallenberg affair now entered a phase where not much happened. The stream of war prisoners from the Soviet Union had begun to ebb, and there were few new witnesses in the case. But in the late 1970s the Wallenberg affair was revived. Two pieces of testimony which the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs found very interesting provided the basis for a note to the Soviet government asking that the matter again be investigated. The reply from the Kremlin was the same as before-Raoul Wallenberg died in 1947. On the basis of additional material, which was regarded as reliable, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ola Ullsten sent another inquiry about Raoul Wallenberg to Russian premier Aleksei Kosygin in the early 1980s. The reply was the same as always-Raoul Wallenberg had died in 1947.

Is Raoul Wallenberg alive today? During the 1980s there was a growing interest in Wallenberg around the world. In 1981 he was declared an honorary citizen of the United States, in 1985 of



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Canada and in 1986 of Israel, and all over the world there is a strong belief that he is still alive and people have demanded his release from Russian imprisonment.

In Sweden and abroad-especially in the United States-voluntary associations are tirelessly continuing their efforts to find answers to the question of what happened to Raoul Wallenberg. Yet despite the opening of numerous secret archives since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, the fate of Wallenberg remains a mystery. (See Per Anger's postscript below.)

Over the past few years, the Swedish Raoul Wallenberg committee has participated in a dialogue with school pupils in Sweden and abroad on such social phenomena as xenophobia, religious conflicts and bullying, which in the worst cases can lead to the kind of persecution that triggered Wallenberg's rescue action in 1944. The recent flood of refugees into many Western European countries, coinciding with a deep recession, has caused rising social tensions and occasional outbursts of racially motivated violence, underscoring the need to intensify existing educational efforts in this field.

During 1994 alone, committee staff visited some 100 schools to speak about the need for compassion and tolerance between national, ethnic and religious groups. In the words of committee secretary Sonja Sonnenfeld, "Seven-year-olds have turned out to be the most promising in group discussions-open, daring, unaffected by peer pressure, curious and delighted to communicate. The latter quality gradually fades as children get older."

After his incomparable humanitarian efforts, Raoul Wallenberg ended up being a lifelong prisoner-a cruel and ironic fate for a man who sacrificed everything to give his fellow human beings a chance to live in freedom. But all around the world, people continue to honor him as a hero, in recognition of his courage and his struggle for human rights.

Postscript by Ambassador Per Anger

In May 1987 Hungary paved the way for Raoul's wider recognition in the Eastern Bloc. An impressive monument honoring his deeds for humanity was dedicated in Budapest. (The first monument there, erected shortly after the end of the war, had been removed by order of the Soviets.) In January 1989 the Hungarian Raoul Wallenberg Association was formed. In April of the same year the American Raoul Wallenberg Scholarship Committee arranged a human rights symposium in Budapest in Raoul's name, followed by a "freedom march" through the streets of the city.

During the following months extensive publicity about Raoul Wallenberg started in the Soviet mass media. A real breakthrough occurred in October 1989 when, at the invitation of the Soviet Government, Raoul's brother and sister, Professor Guy von Dardel and Mrs. Nina Lagergren, as well as Secretary of the Raoul Wallenberg Committee Mrs. Sonja Sonnenfeld, and I went to Moscow for discussions with the Soviet authorities. Before going we were assured by President Bush and Chancellor Kohl of their ardent support for Raoul's release. Prior to our visit, Dr. Kohl had on numerous occasions proven his genuine involvement in resolving Raoul's fate. He praised Raoul as "one of the greatest heroes of our century" and had urged President Gorbachov at their meeting in Bonn in June 1989 to "set this old man free."



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Our mission in Moscow caused enormous interest in both national and international media. There were a number of interviews and programs on Soviet television and radio, as well as the initiation of the making of a documentary film and a movie about Raoul. During our visit we were in close contact with Andrei Sakharov who had been supporting us for many years. And the Swedish Embassy gave us most valuable help.

Professor von Dardel requested that a joint Swedish-Soviet commission be set up for further investigation: the group would include scientists, lawyers and experts on the Soviet prison system, and would look into all the appropriate prison archives. After the August 1991 coup, things happened very fast. A new state commission was formed with representatives from the Swedish and Russian governments. Archive after archive was opened for almost total access, and more than 100 documents about Wallenberg's imprisonment were found.

Regrettably, however, at the time of this writing (November 1994) the commission still has not been able to trace what really happened to Raoul. Consequently, as long as his death has not been proved, it has to be assumed that he may still be alive somewhere in the former Soviet Union.

♣ Jan Larsson is a freelance journalist.

♠ Ambassador Per Anger was stationed in Budapest during the World War II as a Secretary at the Swedish Legation.

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