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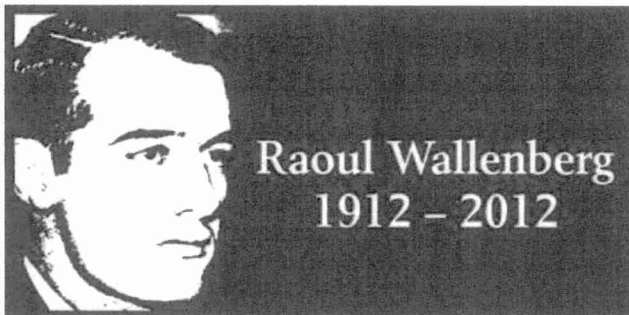
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Raoul Wallenberg 2012

The Government has decided to commemorate, in Sweden and internationally, Raoul Wallenberg's centenary in 2012 by honouring his memory with various events and activities.

This web portal will function as a guide for the year's events.



Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg made a unique contribution in the second half of 1944 by saving tens of thousands of Jews in Budapest from the Holocaust. His actions show that one person's courage and ability can make a difference. His actions are a model for us, not least at a time when more people need to stand up against persecution, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

Raoul Wallenberg was captured by the Soviet Union and taken to the notorious Ljublanka prison in Moscow. No one knows for sure what happened next, and the Swedish Government is still demanding an explanation. Raoul Wallenberg fought against one of the terror dictatorships of his time, and was killed by the other.

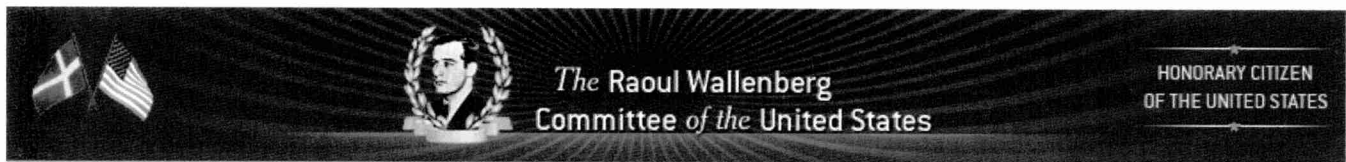
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• A HERO FOR OUR TIME •

Raoul Wallenberg: A Hero For Our Time
By Rachel Oestreicher Bernheim, 1981

Prologue
In Tribute

In these dark and cynical times, when there is so very little for mankind to believe in, when the historian and the investigative reporter have trained us to expect the worst of the great, it is little wonder that the world does not quite know what to make of Raoul Wallenberg - or that too many governments have chosen to maintain a shameful silence.

Sadly, noble words are robbed of their meaning. We hear him called "righteous Gentile," "hero of the Holocaust," "unsung martyr of World War II." Now and then some scholar addresses himself anew to the question of how and by what means Wallenberg managed to save one hundred thousand lives, or probes the psychosocial impulses which compelled him to forsake wealth and ease and undertake so dangerous a mission.

But when we have set down the last pious platitude, made our tallies and pondered his motives, something in Raoul Wallenberg still eludes us. He remains a mystery, as do all pure-souled, whole-hearted, thoroughly moral men. We are left only with the everlasting memory of what he did - and what Raoul Wallenberg did was to fulfill, as none in his time would or could, the terms of the contract which binds each of us to humanity. The Talmud summed up that contract in these words: "Whoever saves a single soul, it is as if he saved the whole world."

Therefore we must do more than cling to his memory. We must proclaim to all the nations that Raoul Wallenberg lives, tirelessly champion his cause, tirelessly press for news of his fate - till the day, if it please God, that Raoul Wallenberg returns to us from the long, bitter totalitarian night.



A monument to Raoul Wallenberg by the Hungarian Sculptor

Raoul Wallenberg was born August 4, 1912. His parents came from two of Sweden's most outstanding families, whose members included diplomats, bankers, and bishops of the Lutheran Church, as well as artists and professors.

Wallenberg's birth was surrounded by tragedy. His handsome father (after whom he was named), an officer in the Swedish Navy and the son of the Swedish ambassador to Japan, died after a brief illness at the age of 23 - eight months after his marriage and three months before the birth of his son.

Raoul's mother, Maj Wising Wallenberg, was only 21 at the time. Three months after Raoul's birth, his grandfather Wising died suddenly of pneumonia. Many years later,



Raoul, aged 3, with his widowed mother, Maj Wising.

Nina Lagergren, Raoul's half-sister said, "All of a sudden, in that once-happy house, there were two widows and this baby boy." The two bereaved women focused all of their love on the child who, says Nina Lagergren, "gave and received so much love that he grew up to be an unusually generous, loving, and compassionate person."



Raoul Wallenberg senior aged 23

In 1918, Maj Wallenberg remarried. Her second husband, Fredrik von Dardel, was a young civil servant in the health ministry. He later became the administrator of Karolinska, Sweden's largest hospital, world famous for its medical research. Two more children were born to Maj von Dardel, Guy and Nina. Both serve as leaders of the international Raoul Wallenberg effort.

This is page 8: Has a different picture to add



Ambassador Gustav Wallenberg, Raoul's grandfather, insisted that Raoul receive an education befitting a member of the Wallenberg family. Accordingly, after high school in Sweden and nine months of compulsory Swedish military service, Raoul was sent to Paris for a year. Then, at his own insistence, he attended the **University of Michigan** in Ann Arbor, where he completed the five year program at the School of Architecture in three and one half years. He graduated in 1935, along with his classmate, future President Gerald Ford.

When Raoul returned to Sweden, his grandfather insisted that it was time for him to begin studying banking and commerce. This decision was to have far-reaching implications.

Raoul's first position was with a Swedish firm in South Africa. In 1936 his grandfather arranged a position for him at the Holland Bank in Haifa, Palestine. There Raoul began to meet young Jews who had already been forced to flee from Nazi persecution in Germany. Their stories affected him deeply.

In 1939, he went to work with a Jewish refugee from Hungary named **Koloman Lauer**. Lauer was owner of the Central European Trading Company, which dealt in foodstuffs. In eight months Raoul was a junior partner of the firm. Raoul often traveled to Hungary. His partner had close relatives living in Budapest. Through them, Raoul began to know the Hungarian Jewish community.

As a Swedish Christian from an outstanding family, he was able to travel freely in Germany as well as in Nazi occupied France. He became familiar with the eccentricities of Nazi bureaucracy and was unusually successful in his required business dealings with Nazi officials.

Wallenberg was increasingly concerned with the fate of Europe's Jewish communities. Actress **Viveca Lindfors**, a friend of Raoul's during his bachelor days in Stockholm, recalls an evening when he took her back to his office. There, he began to tell her of the plight of the Jews in Nazi Europe. His stories, told with frightening intensity, sounded impossible to her.



Settlements for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution in Haifa



Between March and June 1944 427,000 Hungarian Jews were deported. In 46 working days nearly a quarter of a million of them were exterminated.

In the United States, at the behest of President Roosevelt, the **War Refugee Board** was established. Its goal was to save Jews and other Nazi victims. The WRB was well funded. Its top priority, after the partial Nazi Hungarian occupation in June 1944, became the safety of the 750,000 Hungarian Jews.

The War Refugee Board came to neutral Sweden, which had an active embassy in Budapest, looking for someone who would agree to go to Hungary. Such a person would work under the auspices of the Swedish government with the protection of a Swedish diplomatic passport, though representing and funded by the War Refugee Board.

The War Refugee Board's representative in Hungary was to be given a large sum of money and would be empowered by the Swedish government to issue passports to as many Jews as possible. Raoul Wallenberg was chosen to be the War Refugee Board's representative.

On July 9, 1944, Raoul Wallenberg, age 31, arrived at the Swedish embassy in Budapest. He traveled lightly with a backpack and a small pistol. His primary adversary was **SS Lt. Col. Adolf Eichmann**. By the time Wallenberg arrived in Hungary, all 437,000 Jews - men, women, and children - living outside Budapest had already been deported. The rest of Hungary's Jewish community consisted of the 230,000 Jews living in the capital.

Wallenberg's first job was redesigning the Swedish protective passport. This new first secretary of the embassy found the document, which was legal and could be issued only by the Swedish legation, physically unimpressive. He knew that the Nazis and their Hungarian counterparts were frequently people of little education, who would be easily impressed by a large, official looking document. How correct this simple assessment proved to be!

Wallenberg redesigned the "**Schutzpass**." He used the blue and yellow of the Swedish flag, and emblazoned the document with the symbol of the

triple crown of Sweden. This passport saved the lives of tens of thousands of Jews, as well as a great number of anti-Nazi Hungarian partisans.

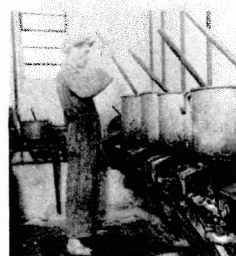
According to former staff member, **Agnes Mandl Adachi**, Wallenberg printed huge placards and put them up all over the city. The billboards, which pictured and proclaimed the validity of the Schutzpass, were designed to make the Nazis familiar with the document and its authority.



In the darkest days of 1944, the Swedish protective passport even provided some humor in the midst of despair. **Edith Ernester**, who lived through that time, recalls: "It seemed so strange - this country of super-aryans, the Swedes, taking us under their wings. Often, when an Orthodox Jew went by, in his hat, beard and sidelocks, we'd say, 'Look, there goes another Swede.'"

A special department was created in the Swedish embassy in Budapest with Wallenberg as its head. It was staffed primarily with Jewish volunteers. Initially, there were 250 workers; later, he had about 400 people working around the clock. Wallenberg seemed to sleep no more than an hour or two a night, and then it was wherever he happened to be working. He was everywhere.

Wallenberg persuaded the Hungarian authorities to free the Jews on his staff from wearing the Yellow Star worn at all times by other Jews. This simple exemption allowed his workers much greater freedom of movement, as well as the protection of anonymity - an essential factor in carrying out many of Wallenberg's missions.



A soup kitchen established by Wallenberg.

Agnes Adachi recalls the night when she and her co-workers needed to complete about 2,000 Schutzpasses and deliver them before six a.m. when the Nazis would be rounding up several thousands of Jewish women. She tells of working by candlelight in a villa on the outskirts of Budapest. Wallenberg came in and very calmly announced that the villa next door was the Gestapo headquarters. He then smilingly assured his staff that they must continue their work and not be alarmed. The Schutzpasses were completed, and each was delivered on foot before six a.m.

According to Mrs. Adachi: "He made a game out of outfoxing the Nazis, but he played it with the utmost seriousness. Most of all, he was like a big brother one looked up to, and he had the most beautiful eyes that I have ever seen. They were so beautiful and they saw everything."



Wallenberg's next step was crucial to ultimate success. In a section of Budapest designated by the Hungarian government as the "International Ghetto", Wallenberg purchased thirty buildings where he flew Swedish flags next to the Jewish Star. These buildings, and others for which he was able to negotiate, were given the full protection of the Swedish government. In these protected houses, Wallenberg set up hospitals, schools, soup kitchens, and a special shelter for 8,000 children whose parents had already been deported or killed.



A hospital established by Wallenberg.

Generally, the Swedish flag and the passports held by those living in the houses were protection enough. If his spies told him that a raid was being planned by the Nazis or their Hungarian counterparts, young, blond Jewish men living in the houses would be dressed in Nazi uniforms and put outside to "guard" the houses.

Occasionally, however, all efforts failed. On Christmas Day, 1944, a gang of Hungarian Nazis entered a protective Swedish children's shelter and seventy-eight children were machine-gunned and beaten with rifle butts. All died.

Because of Wallenberg's swift action in setting up shelters that offered care and protection, the other neutral legations and the International Red Cross also followed and helped greatly to expand the number of protected houses. After the war it was established that about 50,000 Jews living in the foreign houses of the International Ghetto had survived. Of these, about 25,000 were directly under Wallenberg's protection.

On October 15, 1944, the legal Hungarian government of **Admiral Horthy** fell and a pro-Nazi government called the Arrow-Cross was installed. The Germans, who had previously not been so much in evidence, came pouring across the Hungarian border.

The Arrow-Cross gendarmes, an elite, quasi-military corps, were Adolf Eichmann's greatest

allies in his march toward the "final solution". If possible, they were even more sadistic than their German counterparts, and Eichmann used their fervor accordingly.

In late 1944, with the Germans fighting on many fronts, the end of the war and an Allied victory began to seem imminent. This knowledge only seemed to spur Eichmann on to finish his "purification" of Hungary.

In this situation, **Jeno Levai** recalls, "It was of the utmost importance that the Nazis and the Arrow-Crossmen were not able to ravage unhindered - they were compelled to see that every step they took was being watched and followed by the young Swedish diplomat. From Wallenberg they could keep no secrets. The Arrow-Crossmen could not trick him. They could not operate freely. They were held responsible for the lives of the persecuted and the condemned. Wallenberg was the 'world's observing eye', the one who continually called the criminals to account.



Women being forced at gunpoint to join a death march.

As the Germans found themselves increasingly on the military defensive, they were less able to supply Eichmann with trains and trucks for deporting Jews from Hungary. On November 8, 1944, as the Russian army moved closer to Budapest, Eichmann ordered all Jewish women and children rounded up and marched on foot 125 miles to Hegyeshalom on the Austrian-Hungarian border for deportation to the death camps. The men were brought to a work camp in another location.

It took one week to walk in freezing cold and snow, with no food or heavy clothing. Women in high heels, rounded up in the street, children, and the elderly were forced to keep up with the pace set by the gendarmes. All along the route lay the dead and the dying.

Wallenberg, **Per Anger**, then second secretary of the Swedish legation, and their driver went along the route of the march by car, giving out food, clothing, fresh water and Swedish protective passports whenever possible. On the first day of the march, they rescued about 100 people with the protective passports. A few others they rescued by sheer bluff.



Jews on foot being marched westward to the border and deportation.

In the days that followed, Wallenberg made repeated trips along the march route and continued his rescue efforts at the border. He organized Red Cross truck convoys to deliver food and set up checkpoints for those with "Schutzpasses". About 1,500 people were thus rescued from transport to Auschwitz.

At the end of November, Eichmann was ordered back to Berlin by Heinrich Himmler, who was preparing to put out peace feelers to the Allies. The marches were halted and Eichmann was instructed to cease all liquidation efforts.

In December 1944, Wallenberg reported to Stockholm about the death marches. "It was possible to rescue some 2,000 persons from deportation for some reason or another." He added, almost as an afterthought, that the Swedish mission had also secured the return of 15,000 laborers holding Swedish and other protective passes.

John Bierman, in his book on Wallenberg, **RIGHTEOUS GENTILE**, has included a moving eye-witness account of Wallenberg's work. They are the words of **Tommy Lapid**, now director-general of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority. In 1944 Lapid was 13 years old and one of 900 people crowded into a Swedish protected house. His father was dead, and he had been allowed to remain with his mother.



Jewish women being marched through Budapest to a holding camp, prior to deportation. This photograph was taken by Wallenberg.

"One morning, a group of Hungarian Fascists came into the house and said that all the able-bodied women must go with them. We knew what this meant. My mother kissed me and I cried and she cried. We knew we were parting forever and she left me there, an orphan to all intents and purposes. Then two or three hours later, to my amazement, my mother returned with the other women. It seemed like a mirage, a miracle. My mother was there - she was alive and she was hugging me and kissing me, and she said one word: Wallenberg."

"I knew whom she meant because Wallenberg was a legend among the Jews. In the complete and total hell in which we lived, there was a savior-angel somewhere, moving around."

Wallenberg became famous among the Jews of Hungary for his many individual acts of bravery, but it was as a negotiator that he achieved his greatest results. In addition to its International Ghetto, Budapest had a general ghetto, which was guarded and sealed off. The 70,000 Jews kept there as virtual prisoners existed under the most horrible and

primitive conditions, unprotected from the violence of the Arrow-Crossmen.

Wallenberg got word in the first days of January, 1945 that a final plan, masterminded by Adolf Eichmann before he left Hungary, was soon to be carried out. It was to be completed very quickly, before the Russian army could enter Budapest and open the ghetto. The plan called for the total massacre of the ghetto population, by a combined task force of SS men and Arrow-Crossmen led by a priest, Vilmas Lucska. An additional 200 policemen would encircle the ghetto fence, making certain that no Jews escaped.



Hungarian gendarmes execute an 'uncooperative' Jewish leader.

All the documents for the extermination plan were ready and the German commander in Budapest was prepared to carry out his orders, even as the Russians shelled the city.

Wallenberg had been working behind the scenes for many months with **Pal Szalay**, a high-ranking Arrow-Crossman who was a senior police official. Szalay was horrified by the atrocities committed by his compatriots, and he quickly became an invaluable ally. In fact, he was the only prominent member of the Arrow-Cross to escape execution after the war by the People's Court; he was set free with no charges. Szalay helped to save many lives in various incidents, but his most important contribution was as Wallenberg's spokesman in negotiations with the **German general, August Schmidhuber**.

Schmidhuber was commander of the SS troops in Budapest, and Eichmann had designated one of his detachments to spearhead the ghetto action. It was far too dangerous for Wallenberg to meet personally with the SS leader; he was already wanted by the Gestapo, and there had been several attempts on his life. Any direct communication with Schmidhuber would mark Wallenberg as a dangerous international witness to the ghetto extermination.

Wallenberg sent Pal Szalay to speak for him with the general. Szalay informed Schmidhuber that, if the planned massacres took place, Wallenberg would see to it that the general was held personally responsible and would be hanged as a war criminal. With the Russian army already approaching the city, the general reconsidered. He issued the order that no ghetto action was to take place. It was Wallenberg's last victory.

When the Russian army entered Budapest, they found almost 70,000 Jewish men, women and children alive in the general ghetto. Another 25,000 people were in the protected houses, and an additional 25,000 persons of Jewish origin were found hiding in Christian homes, monasteries, convents, church basements, and other sanctuaries.

In all, 120,000 Jews of Budapest survived the "final solution". They were the only substantial Jewish community left in Europe. At least 100,000 of these people owed their lives directly to Raoul Wallenberg.

In Jewish folklore there exists a tale of "36 righteous men." This is the minimum number of anonymous, righteous men who must be living in each generation, as the world exists on their merit. These hidden saints appear in times of great danger to the Jewish community, using their powers to defeat its enemies. Perhaps such a legendary "Lamed-Vovnik," -or- "One of the Just" - made his appearance in the person of Raoul Wallenberg.

The Arrest and Disappearance of Raoul Wallenberg

On January 13, 1945 Wallenberg first contacted the Russians, then on the outskirts of Budapest, in an effort to secure food and supplies for the Jews under his protection.

On January 17 Wallenberg and his driver, **Vilmos Langfelder**, left Budapest for a meeting with the Russian commander, **Marshal Malinovsky**, in the city of Debrecen, about 120 miles east of Budapest. On the way to the meeting with the Soviet commander Wallenberg and his driver were taken into "protective custody" by the **Soviet NKVD**, the secret police later known as the KGB.

The Soviet deputy foreign minister, **Vladimir Dekanosov**, notified the Swedish Ambassador in Moscow that Wallenberg was in Russian hands: "The Russian military authorities have taken measures to protect Raoul Wallenberg and his belongings," said the note.

When he was last seen on January 17 by members of his staff, Wallenberg was already being "protected" by a Russian officer and two soldiers on motorcycles. He was carrying his knapsack, a briefcase containing his own post-war plan, and a large sum of money. It was the last time anyone ever saw Raoul Wallenberg as a free man.

In the first week of February 1945, after a trip by train to Moscow, Wallenberg and his driver were placed in separate cells in Lubianka Prison, the principal interrogation center of the Soviet Secret Police.

That month Wallenberg's mother, **Maj von Dardel**, was informed by the Russian

ambassador to Sweden, that her son was safe in Russia and would be back soon. The family was asked not to make a major issue of Raoul's absence. His safe return was assured.

On January 21, 1945, Wallenberg was placed in cell 123 of Moscow's Lubyanka Prison, where he joined **Gustav Richter**, formerly a police attache at the German embassy in Rumania. Richter testified in Sweden in 1955 that Wallenberg was interrogated only once for about an hour and one half, in the beginning of February 1945. He was accused of spying, perhaps for the United States, since the War Refugee Board was an American based and funded operation. On March 1, 1945, Gustav Richter was moved and his knowledge of Wallenberg ended.

On March 8, 1945, the Soviet-controlled radio in Hungary falsely reported that Wallenberg had been murdered in route to Debrecen, probably by Hungarian Arrow-Cross or still at large agents of the Gestapo.

In April 1945 **Averell Harriman**, then U.S. ambassador to Moscow, was instructed to contact the Swedish ambassador and offer any assistance necessary to help determine Wallenberg's fate.

Swedish Ambassador Staffan Soderblom declined U.S. help or involvement - potentially a major mistake. A second tactical error was committed during a meeting between Stalin and Soderblom on June 15, 1945. The ambassador told the Soviet chief of state that he personally felt Wallenberg was dead, killed by the Arrow-Cross, but would still appreciate the Soviets' looking into the matter, as his government in Stockholm had requested this inquiry. Stalin promised to investigate personally and wrote Wallenberg's name on a pad.

On August 8, 1947, the second important Soviet communique about Wallenberg was sent to Sweden. Written by **Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky** in reply to Swedish government inquiries, the message stated that "a search of prisoner-of-war camps and other establishments had turned up no trace of Wallenberg. In short, 'Wallenberg is not in the Soviet Union and is unknown to us'. The note concluded with the 'assumption' that Wallenberg had either been killed in the battle for Budapest or kidnapped and murdered by Nazis or Hungarian Fascists"

For another ten years, the Vishinsky note was the only official Russian word on Wallenberg's fate. When a group of Swedish citizens nominated Wallenberg for the 1948 Nobel Prize for Peace, it elicited the only public statement ever made by the Soviet Union concerning Sweden and the Wallenberg affair: A Soviet journal again accused the Nazis or the Arrow-Cross of murdering Raoul Wallenberg.

For years thereafter, there was only official Soviet silence. Then as a number of European prisoners were released in 1955, word of Wallenberg's imprisonment began to filter back to Sweden.

On February 2, 1957, a note was delivered to the Swedish government and signed by **Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko**. The note told of a handwritten report by a Col. Smoltsov, head of Lubyanka Prison's health service, to Viktor Abakumov, minister of state security. The report was supposedly written on July 17, 1947:

"I report that the prisoner Walenberg (sic) who is well-known to you, died suddenly in his cell this night, probably as a result of a heart attack. Pursuant to the instructions given by you that I personally have Walenberg under my care, I request approval to make an autopsy with a view to establishing cause of death."

Scrawled across the bottom of the page in the same handwriting was the addendum:

"I have personally notified the minister and it has been ordered that the body be cremated without autopsy. 17, July. Smoltsov."

Smoltsov and Abakumov were both dead in 1957 when Gromyko delivered the note. It is highly irregular for a Soviet prison doctor to report directly to a minister rather than to the head of the prison. The Russians never produced Col. Smoltsov's note or even a photocopy of it - an important omission, given the Russian's penchant for careful documentation.

Gromyko's communique ended by saying:

"The Soviet government presents its sincere regrets for what has occurred and expresses its profound sympathy to the Swedish Government as well as to Raoul's relatives."

On February 9, 1957, the Swedish ambassador to Moscow, Rolf Sohlman, delivered a note to Gromyko from the Swedish government, expressing outrage at the facts as reported in the Russian communique. The note continued that the Swedish government felt the investigation was incomplete. It also found it difficult to believe that everything referring to Wallenberg except the Smoltsov note had been completely obliterated. The Swedish government then pressed the Soviets to continue their investigation.

One final comment on the Gromyko letter and its continuing effect on the fate of Raoul Wallenberg is made in an article in the March, 1981 issue of McClean's Magazine. The author is **Yuri Luryi**, an expert on Soviet law who now lives and teaches in Canada:

"The sad thing is that it was Gromyko who signed the letter back in 1957. He was simply a deputy of the foreign minister then, but now he is a member of the Soviet Mount Olympus. He is one of the gods who never makes mistakes. One panelist in Sweden (Wallenberg Hearings, January, 1981) said that until Gromyko is out of power, they do not expect any positive change in the Soviet approach to Wallenberg's fate."

July 1981

It has taken the world over 50 years to truly recognize the greatness of Raoul Wallenberg - A man who acted while others watched. The survivors of the Holocaust say "NEVER AGAIN". Let us take these words and apply them further: Let us apply them to those who have stood silently as Raoul Wallenberg disappeared into the horrors of the Gulag. Raoul Wallenberg is not only a symbol of injustice, but also a symbol of indifference. Let us act now.

In Acknowledgement

We are indebted to the following authors and publications:

WITH RAOUL WALLENBERG IN BUDAPEST. Per Anger (Holocaust Library).

RIGHTEOUS GENTILE: THE STORY OF RAOUL WALLENBERG, MISSING HERO OF THE HOLOCAUST, John Bierman (Viking Press, New York. Allen Lane, London).

WALLENBERG, THE MAN IN THE IRON WEB. Elenore Lester (Prentice Hall).

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RAOUL WALLENBERG; ANGEL OF RESCUE. Harvey Rosenfeld (Prometheus Books)

ON THE 35YEAR OLD TRAIL OF A MISSING HERO. Yuri Luryhi (McClean's Magazine)

THE WALLENBERG MYSTERY-FIFTY FIVE YEARS LATER. William Korey (The American Jewish Committee)

RAOUL WALLENBERG-REPORT OF THE SWEDISH /RUSSIAN WORKING GROUP. (Ministry For Foreign Affairs)

Click here for a bibliography.

The photographs taken in Budapest are the work of Thomas Veres, Raoul Wallenberg's personal photographer. In order to escape detection, many of the photographs were taken by Veres with a camera hidden in his scarf. A tiny hole in the scarf provided access for the camera lens. These secret photographs provide a searing indictment of Nazi brutality.

Tom Veres lived and worked as a photographer in New York. When he died in 2002, the world lost a one of a kind individual and the Committee lost a great friend.

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Our mission is to perpetuate the humanitarian ideals and the nonviolent courage of Raoul Wallenberg and to remind the world that the heroic actions of a single person have the power to make a difference.

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