
The Raoul Wallenberg Research Initiative RWI-70

RWI-70 4-2022 August 27 2022

Raoul Wallenberg Day in Sweden ++ New Insights from the Raoul Wallenberg Case File, Part II ++ New Publication - The Statements of Ex-SMERSH Officer Boris Solovov about the Raoul Wallenberg Case ++ Wallenberg Symposium in Santa Fe ++ Inga-Britt Ahlenius on Sweden's "empty archives" ++ Matilda von Dardel turns 100 ++ Reckoning with Budapest - a Photo Essay ++



It's Raoul Wallenberg Day in Sweden!



Photo: I. Drukker, courtesy of Max Grunberg

Can you spot him? Raoul Wallenberg in Israel in 1936, surrounded by friends

August 27 marks Raoul Wallenberg Day in Sweden!

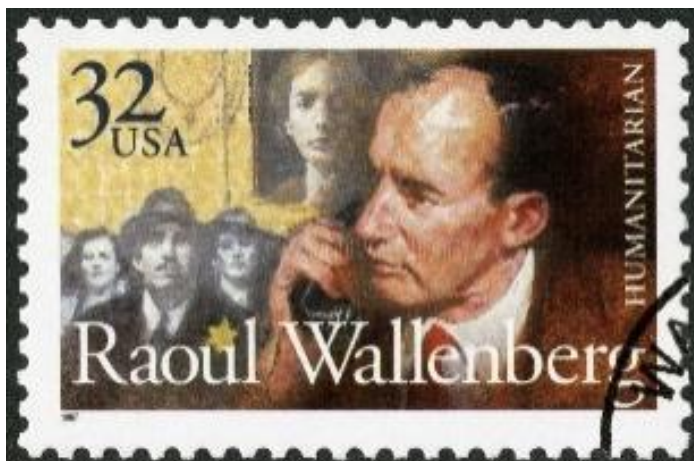


Sweden pays tribute to one of its most honored citizens with various events and celebrations. On Raoul Wallenberg's Day, Sweden's national day for civil courage and humanity, attention is drawn annually to Raoul Wallenberg's efforts during the Holocaust. On this day, the **Raoul Wallenberg Prize** is awarded to a person who continues his legacy and works in his spirit. A second award, the Young Courage Award, an international youth award (bestowed in cooperation with the Swedish Institute (SI) and various Swedish Embassies), honors young people between the ages of 13-20 who have shown great courage and exemplary civic spirit.

The award ceremony, with a speech and musical performance, will be broadcast live via the RWA's Facebook page You can find the link [here](#) The ceremony will take place on the premises of the Swedish Museum of History, the current home of the Swedish Holocaust Museum. Former Prime Minister **Stefan Löfven** will make the presentation. However, this apparently does *not* mean that the new Holocaust Museum will include a special annex dedicated to Raoul Wallenberg and fellow rescuers, as originally planned. The discussions about this are ongoing, in part spurred on by our reporting in the previous circular that so far, the current website of the Swedish Holocaust Museum shows no entry for Raoul Wallenberg and there is no clear plans for an exhibition space about his person or the historic wartime mission to Hungary.

Wallenberg Symposium in Santa Fe - Raoul Wallenberg: A Hero for Our Time

Sunday, September 11 4:00 pm Center for Contemporary Arts



Presented by the Wallenberg Group, with the Adult Education Programs Committee of Temple Beth Shalom, in collaboration with the Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival and Global Santa Fe

Who was Raoul Wallenberg, and what can we learn from his heroic efforts to save Jews in the winter of 1944-45 in Budapest? Why did he disappear in January 1945, and what was his subsequent fate? What lessons can we learn for today's world from Wallenberg's legacy?

Esther Kovari, long-time Santa Fe resident and TBS member, will introduce the program. Kovari's mother was saved by Wallenberg, and her grandfather was appointed by Wallenberg to manage one of the "Swedish houses" that protected Jews in Budapest. Find more information about the event, how to register and the program [here](#).

Stephen Kovary (no relation to Esther Kovari) will relate his personal experience during WWII in Budapest and explain Wallenberg's significance. **Susanne Berger**, a historian and noted expert on the Wallenberg case, will discuss Wallenberg's fate in the Soviet Union and the importance of current efforts to uncover the documentation related to his incarceration and death. **David Scheffer**, a Santa Fe-based law professor and diplomat, whose work focuses on human rights and genocide, will examine the legacy of the Wallenberg case for contemporary war crimes

Rare photos of Raoul Gustaf Oscar Wallenberg (1863 – 1937)



Rare photos of Raoul Wallenberg's grandfather, courtesy of the Swedish Portrait Archive (SPA)

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/Gustaf_Wallenberg_SPA.jpg

New Insights from the Raoul Wallenberg case file – Part II

Since the release of [Part I of our review](#) of the Raoul Wallenberg case file in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs earlier this month we have conducted several follow-up inquiries. It is evident that the documentation in the file remains seriously incomplete, especially for the years 2001 – 2018. This includes large gaps concerning of internal and external correspondence. According to Berndt Fredriksson, the former head of the Swedish Foreign Ministry’s Secrecy Department, e-mails are to be treated as any other communication and are to be preserved. Yet very few e-mail correspondence is included in the file. Moreover, some of the official documents that are included are placed together with newspaper clippings in folders identified simply as “Printed Materials” (Trycksaker). There are no proper indices, content lists or other finding aids.

For an interesting commentary on the general problem with “empty archives” in Sweden, particularly documentation that allows for proper insight into the official decision making processes, I recommend the recent column in [Svenska Dagbladet](#) by **Inga-Britt Ahlenius**. Ahlenius is an expert on freedom of information and a former Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services. She previously joined us at the Raoul Wallenberg International Roundtable in Stockholm in 2017. I have included the Swedish text in full at the end of this circular. Non-Swedish speakers can run it through a translation app – it works quite well. We will pick up this issue in more detail in the coming weeks. Here now follows Part II in our series – a new publication by Dr. **Vadim Birstein**.

New Publication

Vadim Birstein - The Statements of Ex-SMERSH Officer Boris Solovov about the Raoul Wallenberg Case (2022)



Boris Solovov (center) in the autumn of 1945, working as a translator for the Soviet prosecution team that was preparing for the opening of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg. © RGAKFD/ROSINFORM, KRASNOGORSK

The review of the 40,000 pages released in August 2019 has also yielded interesting new insights on the Russian side of the Wallenberg case. Beginning in 1991, former employees of the Soviet State Security Services were interviewed by a special interview group that later briefly functioned as part of the Swedish-Russian Working. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions of these debriefings remained classified until 2019, mainly because many of the individuals questioned had requested confidentiality.

One of the most important testimonies was given by the former SMERSH officer **Boris Solovov** (1921-2006). During 1945-47 Solovov served as part of a group of of investigators who dealt directly with Raoul Wallenberg (initially the 2nd GUKR SMERSH, later the MGB 3rd Main Directorate, 4th Department, headed by Col. Sergei Kartashov).

It is unclear what agreement exactly was achieved between Swedish and Russian regarding the interview transcripts and the question of confidentiality in general. As reported in the last circular, even before the beginning of start of the Working Group, the Russian officials had already suggested quite directly in June 1991 that “a high degree of confidentiality would result in increased openness on part of the KGB.” In other words, it was a suggestion of a compromise that the Swedish side would keep some of the documentation and possibly also (verbally shared) information the KGB (later FSB) could provide to themselves at least temporarily.

This confidentiality requirement did not only apply to sensitive discussions with former Soviet State Security employees or relations with the press, but also to some internal working conditions of the Working Group. Some reasonable restrictions were undoubtedly necessary in order to facilitate the work. Others were more questionable. For example, the Russian side objected to the participation of qualified Soviet experts in the Working Group (only officials were permitted). The Swedish side eventually acquiesced to this request, along with several others.

Notably, neither the independent consultants to the Working Group nor Guy von Dardel were permitted to be present at the interviews of former MGB/KGB officials. More importantly, they did not have access to the recordings or transcripts but had to rely on summaries. In 1998, Mr. Solovov was invited to a full Working Group meeting, along with another investigator, Daniil Kopelyansky, but that setting was hardly conducive to an open, in-depth discussion.

As Dr. Birstein outlines in his new analysis, as a result, some important details of Solovov’s statements went unnoticed or could not be clarified in time – an opportunity missed while the official investigation was still ongoing.

It is now clear that from the very start, Russian officials wanted to keep the official inquiry into the fate of Raoul Wallenberg in very narrow parameters. Top-level KGB/FSB officials insisted that Wallenberg had been held only in one prison during his stay in the Soviet Union, namely the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison in Moscow. They maintained this claim even in light of the many

witness statements that attested to Wallenberg's presence in Lefortovo Prison during 1945-1947. Only when Dr. Birstein and his colleague Dr. Arseny Roginsky, co-founder of the Memorial Society, a leading human rights organization, discovered documentation in the so-called Special Archive (now the Russian State Military Archive, RGVA) that proved Wallenberg's stay in Lefortovo Prison, did Russian officials abandon this claim. The KGB also immediately shut down the direct access Roginsky and Birstein had enjoyed to original prisoner files. None of these facts were made public or were later included in the official Swedish and Russian Working Group Reports of 2001.

Similarly, the interviews with former MGB/KGB employees were carried out under serious restrictions. The interviews were conducted and overseen by Andrei Ziborov, a representative of the KGB, in the presence of a Swedish Embassy official (then 2nd Secretary Björn Lyrvall who is currently Director of Sweden's National Defense Radio Establishment, FRA) and Nikolai Arzhannikov, at the time deputy chair of the Human Rights Committee of the Russian Federation Supreme Council.

Dr. Birstein found that the interviewers did not follow up some relevant details provided by Solovov and misunderstood or overlooked others. For example, Solovov mentioned that he had been contacted by a high-ranking KGB General (Alexandr Zagvozdin) whose name was thoroughly misspelled in the transcript. Instead of "Zagvozdin" it was given as "Zabotin". As a result, nobody pursued this interesting lead or interviewed Zagvozdin to understand his interest and possible knowledge regarding the Wallenberg case.

Neither the Swedish nor the Russian Working Group Report properly explained the background of Boris Solovov's statements regarding a package he allegedly delivered to the MGB Archive Department sometime between 1947 – 1951 with materials he stated belonged to "prisoner no. 7" who he claimed was Raoul Wallenberg. The final Swedish and Russian Working Group reports failed to mention that just a few weeks earlier, Solovov had read an article authored by Dr. Birstein, entitled "The Secret of Cell no. 7" (in which he presented some of the documents he and Mr. Roginsky had discovered).

As Birstein writes, given Solovov's exchanges with at least one top-FSB official prior to his debriefings. It cannot be excluded that the story was in part presented as a cover for the "accidental" discovery of Wallenberg's personal belongings in October 1949, in the KGB archives. You can find Dr. Birstein's [full analysis here](#).

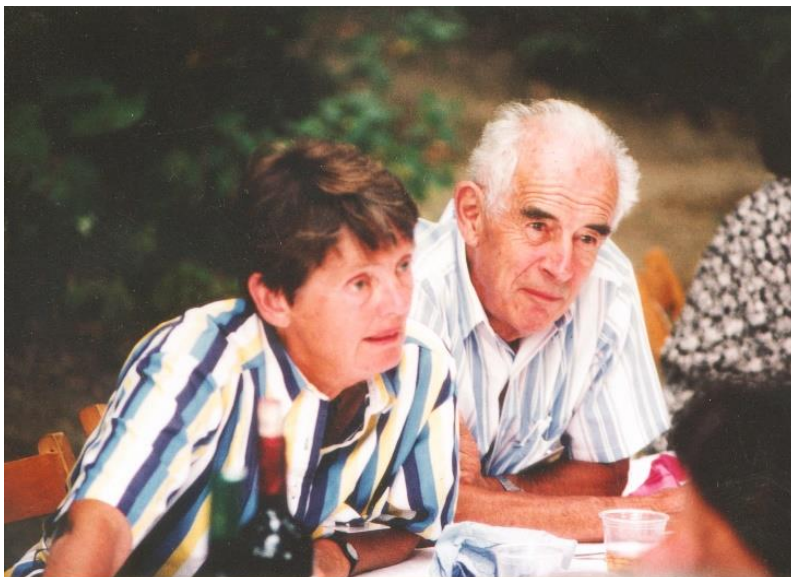
The World through a Lens: Reckoning with Budapest - A Photo Essay



Budapest's Castle District, in the distance, framed through a stained-glass window in the Parliament building. [The New York Times](#), Stephen Hiltner.

On a more contemporary note, New York Times journalist Stephen Hiltner spent three months [capturing a contemporary portrait of Hungary's capital](#), where he lived for several years as a child in the 1990s. Unfortunately, this article is behind a paywall, but hopefully you find a way to read it. You can also try to access it via the photographer's [website](#).

A life well lived: The 100th birthday of Matilda von Dardel



Matti and Guy von Dardel


In November, the von Dardel family marks a true milestone: Matilda von Dardel (Raoul Wallenberg's sister-in-law) turns 100 years old. Ms. von Dardel can look back on a long and adventurous life, filled with interesting people and centered around a large and loving family. Known as "Matti" to her friends, she was born in Stockholm on November 3, 1922. Her father was the painter Kurt Jungstedt. In 1947 she met the young physicist Guy von Dardel, and together they settled into a long and happy marriage. While raising two daughters and focusing on their growing family, she supported her husband's lifelong search for his brother with unshakable determination and fortitude. A deep love of nature and art sustained her in the most difficult moments. This included surviving a plane crash that left her in physical discomfort for many years. Her self-deprecating sense of humor, coupled with a fierce determination to embrace life on all its terms, have left an indelible mark on all who know her.

In 2016, at age 94, Matti accompanied us to Raoul Wallenberg International Roundtable in Moscow where she addressed a symposium at the Memorial Society. She said this about her brother-in-law Raoul Wallenberg at the time:

A very long time ago, when I was very young, I met Raoul at a ball. A nice, elegant, good looking young man. Also very caring. As he thought I was too young to be out late, he kindly accompanied me back to my parents' home, which of course irritated me! At that time, I did not know that a few years later I would marry his brother and that Raoul would be part of my life up until today.

Her strength of character, deep sense of loyalty, fundamental decency and generosity of spirit are an inspiration – Happy Birthday to a truly special person and a life well lived. 🍷🍷

Hope you enjoy the late summer days – we will connect again in the coming weeks ...

 is on its way...

See Inga-Britt Ahlenius's column below (illustrated, interestingly, with a photo of file folders from the Raoul Wallenberg investigation).

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SvD



Inga-Britt Ahlenius: Utan dokumentation kan ingen granskas



Raoul Wallenberg-utredningen. Foto: TT

Det finns ett inbyggt dilemma i offentlighetsprincipen. I stället för en förvaltning med insyn har vi fått en förvaltning där det brister i öppenhet vad gäller belysning av centrala beslutsprocesser i staten.

Inga-Britt Ahlenius

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Frihetstiden var några dynamiska decennier mellan två kungliga envälden. 1720 års regeringsform gav riksdagen ställning som politikens centrum. Frihet var epokens honnörsord, och det var en storhetstid för vetenskapen med bland andra Linné och Celsius. Till denna blomstring bidrog säkert Tryckfrihetsförordningen från 1766, ett av frihetstidens stora lagbeslut.

Censuren avskaffades, alla handlingar som inte uttryckligen var hemligstämplade skulle vara tillgängliga för alla: ständernas debatter, utskottens överläggningar, domstolarnas domslut, myndigheternas förhandlingar och riksrådets diskussioner. Kungens dictamina kunde nu publiceras och allmänheten få ta del av dem. Arkiven öppnades för forskare som uttryckligen uppmanades att utnyttja dem.

Tryckfrihetsförordningen gör Sverige till ett unikt öppet samhälle, säger vi. Det öppna Sverige har blivit vårt varumärke i världen.

Nyligen presenterade Coronakommissionen sin granskning av regeringens hantering av coronapandemin. Kommissionen hade svårigheter att få ut information från regeringskansliet och fann det uppseendeväckande att det inte fanns någon dokumentation om vilka diskussioner som fördes, vem som föreslog vilka åtgärder och hur man resonerade när man kom fram till beslut. Den centrala krisgruppen för strategisk samordning hade inte fört några mötesanteckningar utan arbetade med muntliga sammanfattningar. Att det skulle finnas någon relevant dokumentation som belyser processen fram till regeringens beslut att ansöka om medlemskap i Nato, det kan vi glömma.

Frihetstidens grundlagsfäder skulle ha varit bekymrade – i stället för en förvaltning med insyn har vi fått en förvaltning där det brister i öppenhet vad gäller belysning av centrala beslutsprocesser i staten.

Det finns ett inbyggt dilemma i offentlighetsprincipen. Redan som teoretiskt dilemma är det fullt logiskt: om man är angelägen om att saker och ting inte ska bli omedelbart offentliga skriver man inte ner det så att det dagen därpå kan stå i tidningen. Att handlingar omedelbart kan bli offentliga leder till att viktiga processer i staten inte dokumenteras eller behålls i de statliga arkiven.

Offentlighetsprincipen har haft stor betydelse för utveckling av en förvaltning av hög kvalitet. Det är inte oviktigt att krognotor och reseräkningar finns tillgängliga för granskning – missbruk i det lilla kan avslöja vad som sker i det stora. Men, det råder absolut ingen tvekan om att offentlighetsprincipen genom att förvandla skriftliga processer till muntliga överläggningar, gör oss urarva på material för forskning och underlag för granskning för ansvarsutkrävande.

Det var inte vad 1766 års fäder syftade till. Förvaltningen har anpassat sig till nya mediala realiteter. Ska vi ha det så här? Det är hög tid att begrunda offentlighetsprincipens inbyggda dilemma.

Jag har skrivit om detta förr – första gången för 20 år sedan och jag känner med Catullus. ”Att skriva i vinden och det snabba vattnet” (aqua rapida), skriver han. I hans fall om brev till en likgiltig älskade.

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