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## The Raoul Wallenberg Research Initiative RWI-70

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Presentation to the Swedish Parliament

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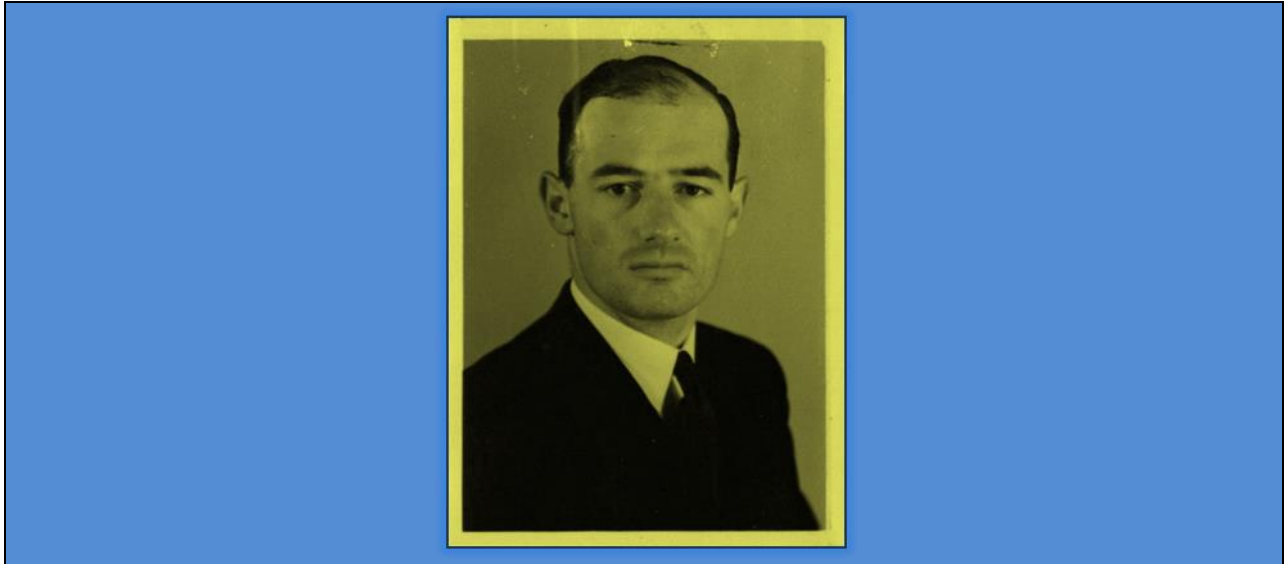


Photo Credit: Raoul Wallenberg's photo on a visa application he filed in June 1943 with the Hungarian Legation, Stockholm.  
Source: The Hungarian National Archives, Budapest.

**Session I** (*Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein*)

**The Swedish government's profound passivity in the Wallenberg case 1945-1947**

*Why did Swedish officials so readily accept as early as the end of 1945 that Raoul Wallenberg was dead and could not be saved?*

**Stalin's offer to Sweden in April 1946: A missed opportunity to solve Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance [Fig.1]**

## Background

Since 2015 we have made a concerted effort to address the remaining gaps of knowledge in the Raoul Wallenberg case. With this end in mind, over the past six years, we compiled two separate catalogues of pending questions which we presented to Swedish and Russian archives and government agencies. [\[Attachment 1 and 2\]](#) Our working hypotheses was that filling at least some of the gaps in the Wallenberg case record would allow researchers to assess whether the previously missing information was relevant for the analysis of key unsolved aspects of the Wallenberg mystery, especially the question of Wallenberg's fate; or if the missing details simply provide interesting additional facets to the story that do not change the fundamental facts or assessment of the case. This concerns all three phases of the Wallenberg case: Raoul Wallenberg's personal and professional background; his contacts and activities in Hungary; and his disappearance and unsolved fate in the Soviet Union.

For various reasons, previous inquiries applied relatively narrow parameters of investigations. (We will discuss this problem in more detail later today). We believe that a slightly broader approach could lead to a more detailed understanding of the Wallenberg case and, with that, potentially open up important additional avenues of research.

**Some of the new information we have collected over the past two years fill in additional details of the case. Some of them directly challenge several long-held assumptions in the case by opening up a somewhat different perspective of certain aspects of the Wallenberg mystery. This shift in emphasis has implications for the continuing investigation of Raoul Wallenberg's still not completely resolved fate. The additional details and new findings should now be examined and analyzed in greater detail by international Wallenberg experts, historians, and the public. In particular, investigators should examine the question if Swedish officials and decision makers at any point, but particularly in 1946, made a conscious decision to leave Raoul Wallenberg to his fate, due to a variety of motives. In addition, it must be examined in greater detail if and how the official Swedish perception of Raoul Wallenberg - including the possible fear of public revelations of serious Swedish neutrality violations in Hungary during World War II - affected the official Swedish handling of Wallenberg's disappearance in 1945, as well as in later years.**

On the Russian side, it has become very clear that – contrary to official claims - important documentation exists in Russian archives that would fill at least some crucial gaps in the Wallenberg case. Since the end of the Working Group in 2001, we [Birstein/Berger] have kept up a dialogue with the Russian authorities. During this time, we have obtained many documents and information that should have been made available decades ago, especially to the official investigations of the 1990s. Important other documentation continues to be withheld. The best example are the records about a Prisoner no. 7 who was interrogated in the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison on July 22–23, 1947. The archivists of the Central Archive of the Russian State Security Service (FSB) have indicated that this prisoner is with “great likelihood” identical with Raoul Wallenberg. However, continued refusal by the FSB Central Archive to

provide direct and uncensored access to the interrogation registers led to the decision by Marie Dupuy, Raoul Wallenberg's niece to sue the agency in 2017.

Various international laws and conventions grant victims of repression and their families a right to the truthful information about their imprisonment. Under certain circumstances, these rights and laws may be [legally] restricted, but they still need to be applied and enforced.

**A list of the most important research requests [Attachment 3] has been recently submitted to Russian authorities, via the Swedish Embassy in Moscow. However, the Swedish government, including Swedish lawmakers, should also request centrally important records known to exist in Russian archives directly from the Russian government. Raoul Wallenberg's family and researchers cannot and should not be expected or left to take on this task more or less by themselves.**

**We remain hopeful that a country like Sweden, with such obvious qualities that it produced a man like Raoul Wallenberg, will do everything possible to secure full justice for him and for all other missing Swedish citizens whose fate remains unknown.**

### **Earlier conclusions**

In 2004, an official Commission (the so-called Eliasson Commission) which investigated the official Swedish handling of Wallenberg's disappearance after 1945, concluded in its final report that Raoul Wallenberg was essentially doomed from the moment of his detention by Soviet military counterintelligence in Hungary in January 1945.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the Commission asserted that the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin never made a serious offer to negotiate Wallenberg's release and that he, therefore, almost certainly could not have been saved. This means that while the Swedish government's pronounced passivity in the case was both deeply disturbing and regrettable, it was ultimately not decisive for Wallenberg's fate.

The Commission found no direct links between Raoul Wallenberg and either Swedish or [other] foreign intelligence services, beyond the ones that are widely known, such as the contacts between Wallenberg and representatives of the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Stockholm in 1944 that may have compromised him in Soviet eyes.

The Commission concluded that, the passive Swedish posture can be traced mainly to the Swedish officials' overwhelming fear of the Soviet Union and the desire to position their country favorably and securely in the post-war world. This included the Swedish government's wish to sign a large Swedish-Soviet trade agreement in 1946. However, the 2004 investigation concluded that the serious phase of the negotiations for the planned agreement began only in August 1946, a full two months after the fateful discussion between Staffan Söderblom, the

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<sup>1</sup> See "Ett Diplomatiskt Misslyckande: Fallet Raoul Wallenberg och den Svenska Utrikesledningen [A Diplomatic Failure: The case of Raoul Wallenberg and the Swedish Foreign Office]." *Statens offentliga utredningar (SOU)* 2003:18 (in Swedish), <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2003/02/sou-200318-/>.

much-criticized Swedish Ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Stalin in June 1946. In the highly unusual meeting Söderblom essentially asked the Soviet leader to confirm that Raoul Wallenberg was no longer alive, a request that many analysts believe sealed Raoul Wallenberg's fate. Söderblom is widely believed to have acted on his own accord, without any direct instruction from his superiors.

## Presentation

The new findings directly challenge some of these assertions. A closer examination of the background facts in the Wallenberg case potentially leads to important changes in the interpretation of specific aspects of his story. 76 years after Wallenberg's disappearance, several key questions remain unresolved:

- What happened to Raoul Wallenberg in the crucial summer of 1947?
- Why did the Soviet leader Josef Stalin order Raoul Wallenberg's detention and why did he never release him?
- And, viewed from the Swedish perspective, why were the efforts on Wallenberg's behalf so passive?

On the Swedish side of the investigation, of special interest is the question why Swedish officials so readily accepted the rumors and Soviet disinformation that Raoul Wallenberg was dead or could not be saved almost immediately after his disappearance in Hungary in January 1945, in the absence of convincing evidence, when there were plenty of reasons (and rumors) to assume that he could well be alive? In contrast to the statements of earlier investigation, we argue that, based on the currently available record, Stalin's intentions about Raoul Wallenberg are not entirely clear. Moreover, there existed a real possibility to press the Soviet government for clarification of Wallenberg's disappearance, in particular during the year 1946.

As we just heard from Peter Axelsson, another key question is why the Swedish government did not take advantage of several important opportunities to learn the truth about Raoul Wallenberg fate during the crucial years of 1945-46. In particular, the Swedish-Soviet trade negotiations from May - October 1946 have not received close enough attention.<sup>2</sup>

It is known that as early as the spring of 1946, Stalin signaled a wish to reduce tensions with Sweden. In fact, a formal Soviet policy change towards Sweden was discussed on the Soviet side as early as March and then June 1945 – this is important to keep in mind. [Fig. 2] As Peter outlined very effectively in his presentation, previous investigations mainly emphasized the eagerness of certain officials in the Swedish government like [Swedish Foreign Minister] Östen Undén to conclude a large trade agreement. However, it has been overlooked that by early April 1946 Stalin and the Soviet leadership actually offered the Swedish government a clear quid-pro-quo: If a large Swedish-Soviet credit and trade Agreement would be concluded still by

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<sup>2</sup> [Raoul Wallenberg's fate and a Swedish billion-kronor loan to the Soviet Union - Buxus Stiftung \(fritz-bauer-forum.de\)](http://www.buxus-stiftung.de/forum.de)

the end of the year, 'favorable conditions' would be created between Sweden and the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> [Fig. 3] The Politburo had issued a precise set of instructions how the Soviet Envoy in Stockholm, Iliya Chernishev, was to brief the Swedish government later that month. The next Politburo decision on May 15 ordered to prepare the Soviet version of the agreement by May 22.<sup>4</sup>

As Peter Axelsson outlined, just two days later, on May 24, 1946, a high-level official Swedish delegation traveled to Moscow to enter into detailed discussions and negotiations about the agreement. Therefore, the issue was very much on the official Swedish-Soviet agenda right at the time of the meeting between Swedish Envoy Söderblom and Stalin a few weeks later, on June 15, 1946. This fact, too, has not been emphasized.

For that reason, assertions by previous investigations (i.e., the Eliasson Commission, 2004) that serious negotiations about the Swedish-Soviet credit and trade agreement began in earnest only in August 1946 and did not significantly impact 's actions, are problematic. The reason this is important is because the implication of this analysis is that even if the Swedish government cared more about a Swedish-Soviet trade agreement than about rescuing their own diplomat, it did not matter – his fate had already been sealed several months earlier. Moreover, in this interpretation (without any of the broader context we just heard), Ambassador Söderblom was left to shoulder the lion share of the blame, since he supposedly acted purely on his own initiation, without knowledge or instructions from his superiors.

However, according to his June 18, 1946, report of the meeting with Stalin, Söderblom was instructed in some detail by his superiors what message he was to relay to Soviet officials about the planned trade agreement and its desired effect on Swedish-Soviet relations.

There are currently no indications that Söderblom received direct instructions about Raoul Wallenberg. However, just a few days before his meeting with Stalin, Söderblom had delivered a personal letter from Marcus Wallenberg to the former Soviet Ambassador in Stockholm Alexandra Kollontay (why had by then returned to Moscow), so he was certainly keenly aware of the issue. Also, Söderblom clearly could not have delivered such a letter without the knowledge and approval of his superiors, in particular Östen Undén

Söderblom had long been firmly convinced that Raoul Wallenberg was dead. Already one year earlier (April 14, 1945) Söderblom had concluded that “even with the best intentions in the world, it may be impossible for the Soviet authorities to win clarity about Raoul Wallenberg’s fate.” He apparently never changed his position, as he confirms in an official memo (addressed

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<sup>3</sup> Minutes (*Protokol*) no. 50 (Special no. 50) of the Politburo decisions from March 6 to April 1946 signed by I. Stalin. The decision no 83 (P50/83) “On our relations with Sweden” dated April 5, 1946, is on pp. 37–38 of the *Protokol*. RGASPI (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, Moscow). Fond/Collection 17 (Politburo materials). Opis'/Inventory 162. Delo/File 38. Ll. Pp. 36–38 (*a newly obtained document*).

<sup>4</sup> Minutes (*Protokol*) no. 52 (Special no. 52) of the Politburo decisions from May 8 to August 4 signed by I. Stalin. The decision no. 52 (P52/50), point 1: “On negotiations about credit with the USA and Sweden” dated May 18, 1946, is on pp. 74–75 of the *Protokol*. RGASPI. F. 17 (Politburo materials). Op. 162. D. 38. Ll./Pp. 74–82 (*a newly obtained document*).

to deputy head of the Political Department of the Swedish Foreign Office Sven Grafström in December 1945. [Fig. 4] Consequently, during a six-months period – from December 1945 until June 1946 – Staffan Söderblom formally asked Soviet officials at least three times (on December 26, 1945, as well as March 9 and June 15, 1946) to confirm that Wallenberg was no longer alive, including during his fateful personal meeting with Stalin. Each time he consulted directly with his superiors, as well as the former Soviet Ambassador to Sweden, Alexandra Kollontay, who had been forced to return to Moscow in March 1945.

However, during the spring of 1946, within the span of two months, the Soviet side released two Swedish prisoners – Viva Lundberg and the journalist Edvard af Sandeberg - in an apparent effort to signal good will towards Sweden.

The failure to make a strong representation on behalf of Raoul Wallenberg at this particular moment is all the more remarkable because at the time Swedish officials – and Söderblom personally – had sensed a slight change in the attitude of Soviet representatives to the Wallenberg case, prompting Söderblom on April 30, 1946, to report to Stockholm that “against all expectations”, Raoul Wallenberg could well be alive. Söderblom apparently felt that Sandeberg’s release could suggest that Wallenberg, too, could have survived. Moreover, despite repeated requests, Abramov and other Soviet officials had not given him any official confirmation that Wallenberg was, in fact, dead. [Fig. 5]

**One central question is what Söderblom, and his superiors decided to do at this particular moment, when a certain level of doubt arose about Wallenberg’s fate. Was the meeting with Stalin in June 1946 intended as a way to push the Soviet leader to provide full clarity about Wallenberg’s disappearance, or was the main intention to signal that Swedish officials would accept a Soviet statement that, despite numerous efforts, Wallenberg’s whereabouts could not be determined? Omi Söderblom’s upcoming book will hopefully provide us with a few important insights about this particular point.**

Another key question is how Söderblom’s presentation was interpreted by Stalin, especially in light of the earlier request made since December 1945 to receive confirmation of Wallenberg’s death.

Apparently, Söderblom (and presumably some of his superiors, including the Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén) were convinced that if Wallenberg was in the Soviet Union or in hiding, he would find a way to communicate or Soviet authorities would inform Swedish diplomats about his presence, as they had done with af Sandeberg, Lundberg and several other Swedish citizens.

Söderblom had no way of understanding how the Soviet system worked and that Raoul Wallenberg was not an internee (like af Sandeberg, for example) but listed as a prisoner of war. Wallenberg was not under the authority of the Commissariat (later Ministry) for Internal Affairs (NKVD/MVD), as af Sandeberg and other released Swedes were, but of SMERSH, Soviet military counterintelligence, and then the State Security Ministry (MGB), that included SMERSH in 1946.

In fact, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs learned of Wallenberg's detention by Soviet military counterintelligence (SMERSH) officially only in early 1947. However, they had understood very well unofficially already in early 1946 that Wallenberg was in the hands of SMERSH.

The newly discovered documentation demonstrates that Sergei Kruglov, Soviet Commissar/Minister of Internal Affairs, suggested to release af Sandeberg, who was in custody of that Commissariat/Ministry.<sup>5</sup> [Fig. 6] In the Wallenberg case it was Viktor Abakumov, State Security (MGB) Minister, who was responsible for the suggestion about Wallenberg's fate. Therefore, Wallenberg's imprisonment and information about his whereabouts was entirely controlled by Abakumov, as head of SMERSH and then MGB Minister, and Stalin personally. (This is a crucial point which we will discuss further this afternoon).

In the months after Wallenberg's disappearance, not only Söderblom but other Swedish diplomats, too, repeatedly stressed in public communications that Raoul Wallenberg was "most likely dead" (Gunnar Gerring, March 1946), or that they felt "sure he is dead;" (Raoul Wallenberg's uncle Col. Colvin's correspondence with the US Ambassador to Moscow Walter Bedell-Smith, July 1946, in which Colvin cites the statements made to him by certain Swedish officials.); and that even if he were alive, he could not be saved (US State Department records, September 1945). [Fig. 7, Fig. 8] The Swedish Foreign Ministry also did not react to the fact that two Swiss diplomats who had been detained at the same time as Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest were released in January 1946 in an exchange of Soviet defectors.

**Therefore, it appears that Staffan Söderblom's much criticized behavior can be partially explained in the context of official Swedish attitudes at the time. In that sense, Söderblom's actions in many ways represented the norm rather than the exception to the Swedish Foreign Ministry's position in the Wallenberg case.**

This is further underscored by other statements, such as the one made by the new Swedish Ambassador to Moscow, Rolf Sohlman to Mikhail Vetrov, Acting Head of the 5th European Department (Scandinavia) of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on July 16, 1947. [Fig. 9] According to Vetrov's account "S.[ohlman] explained that, according to the information that Stockholm has, Wallenberg wanted to leave Budapest for Debrecen, where the just formed Hungarian government was located. One cannot exclude, of course, that in Budapest or somewhere on the way something happened because at that time, there were fights and bombardments." These are almost the same words as the ones used by Staffan Söderblom in his meeting with Stalin.

However, during the years 1945-1947 some top-Swedish officials clearly did not share Söderblom's certainty that Wallenberg was dead, nor were informed in detail about

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<sup>5</sup> S. Kruglov's letter to V. Molotov dated March 12, 1946. GARF (State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow). F. R-9401. Op. 2 (Special NKVD/MVD Folder of V. M. Molotov). D. 142. Ll. 51-51ob/back (*a newly obtained document*).

Söderblom's exact conversations with Abramov and other Soviet representatives. Sven Grafström regularly forwarded new witness information about Wallenberg's possible whereabouts, along with specific instructions how to present it to Soviet authorities, which Söderblom repeatedly ignored.

The Swedish Working Group concluded in its report in 2000 that Staffan Söderblom apparent "lack of judgment" during his posting in Moscow may have been due to the beginning symptoms of a mental illness that would later force him to seek early retirement.<sup>6</sup> [Fig. 10] However, new information discovered in Söderblom's Swedish Foreign Ministry's personnel file shows that while the Ambassador's controversial role in the Wallenberg case may have contributed to a severe mental break-down he suffered in 1951 (which led to his early retirement), was not the only or perhaps even the decisive cause for his problems.<sup>7</sup> [Fig. 11] For that reason, the question arises why Swedish officials made the claim when they knew it was questionable.

**However, two central questions remain: why did some Swedish officials so readily accept the idea that Raoul Wallenberg was dead and why did his potential loss not elicit a more determined official response?**

Raoul Wallenberg's mother, Maj von Dardel, was keenly aware of the Swedish Foreign Ministry's general attitude towards her son, already immediately after his disappearance. She repeatedly decried the "lack of enthusiasm" displayed by Swedish diplomats who, as she charged, assumed without evidence that Raoul Wallenberg was dead. (P.M. March 4, 1947, Lennart Petri) [Fig. 12] She also referred to the official handling of her son's case as "cold blooded".

Much has been said about Sweden's great fear of Russia. Contrary to general belief, during the years 1945-1947, the most crucial period in the Wallenberg case, Swedish and Soviet representatives felt surprisingly comfortable to discuss and secretly coordinate several highly sensitive issues, such as the repatriation of Soviet soldiers in Norway via Swedish territory in late 1945, the expulsion of 146 Baltic prisoners of war to Soviet authorities in early 1946, handing 2, 158 former Soviet POWs and 1,051 civilians who stayed in Sweden over to the Soviets, as well as quietly arranging the recall of Staffan Söderblom from Moscow a few months later. For some reason, however, they never raised the question of Wallenberg's fate during these discussions.

Peter Axelsson has just stated that in his view, the strong desire by the Swedish government in 1946 to conclude a bilateral credit and trade agreement may have led to a conscious decision on the part of some Swedish officials to prioritize Sweden's broader national interest over the

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<sup>6</sup> Most references in this review are given to the report available on the Internet: *Raoul Wallenberg. Report of the Swedish-Russian Working Group*. Stockholm, 2000, <https://www.government.se/contentassets/9c4e0d48f38b428d894eb5fa55c883c8/raoul-wallenberg---report-of-the-swedish-russian-working-group>.

<sup>7</sup> [Staffan Söderblom's Severe Guilt Complex - Buxus Stiftung \(fritz-bauer-forum.de\)](http://www.buxus-stiftung.de/fritz-bauer-forum.de)



need to solve Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance. Peter argues that Swedish officials possibly felt that they could not do both: Successfully negotiate a trade agreement with the Soviet Union and at the same time press the Soviet leadership for information about Raoul Wallenberg.

It appears that Staffan Söderblom's much criticized behavior can be partially explained in the context of these official Swedish priorities.

However, even when, in October 1946, Sweden and the Soviet Union signed a \$300 million credit and trade agreement (one billion Swedish crowns, approximately \$4 billion in today's value) in record time, the Swedish government did not take this opportunity to press the Soviet leadership for clarity about Wallenberg's fate or his release. Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén also failed to take up the Wallenberg case directly with the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov when they met in New York, at the United Nations, in December 1946.

**Therefore, the question remains why Raoul Wallenberg would have been expendable to the Swedish government, especially at a moment when the Soviet leadership had signaled a more conciliatory attitude towards Sweden and when it appeared that Wallenberg could well still be alive?**

Rumors persisted within the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs well into the early 1950s that Wallenberg had repeatedly snubbed authority. His colleagues in Budapest described him as "dumb-daring" and having acted in an "extremely selfish" manner. The Swedish historian Bengt Jangfeldt has suggested that these claims were possibly linked to Raoul Wallenberg supposedly taking charge of a certain amount of gold and other valuables, without obtaining prior permission, before his departure from Budapest.<sup>8</sup> These items had been stored at the Swedish Legation on behalf of persecuted Jews. There currently exists no clear evidence for this claim. Others have argued that Wallenberg and his colleagues had provided Swedish protective papers to certain Hungarian and German Nazis, as a bribe to assist him and his aides in protecting the people under their care.

Records available in the archives of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs show that Swedish officials did not want anything to interfere with the normalization of Swedish-Soviet relations. This included the potential claims by Swedish companies for lost business in the Baltic countries as well as Eastern Europe.

Newly obtained documentation from the archive of the Swedish military intelligence service (MUST) also suggests that several previously unknown or not fully acknowledged factors may have influenced the Swedish government's passive approach to Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance. In particular, there are indications that Swedish intelligence operations in Hungary may have compromised Raoul Wallenberg in the eyes of Swedish officials.

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<sup>8</sup> [Raoul Wallenberg and the Question of the Jewish Valuables - RWI-70](#)

Earlier official investigation found no direct or connections between Raoul Wallenberg and Swedish intelligence organizations and Swedish intelligence operations in Hungary were believed to have been very limited. However, this assessment should now be partially revised. The new records reveal that Swedish wartime intelligence operations in Hungary began much earlier and were more extensive than previously known. They included a secret Swedish-Hungarian intelligence sharing agreement regarding the Soviet Union which began as early as the autumn of 1943.<sup>9</sup> [Fig. 13]

These operations, carried out in close cooperation with American and Hungarian intelligence agencies as well as British representatives, aimed not only to support the Hungarian resistance against the Nazi German occupation but also to prevent or at least limit the expected Soviet occupation of Hungary. This means they were at least partially directed against the Soviet Union and may have already included some post-war considerations. Such activities were potentially problematic because the Swedish government represented Soviet interests in Hungary since 1941.

Several Swedish signal intelligence officers were stationed in Hungary, including at the Swedish Legation in Budapest in 1944. None of these communications have ever been released and to this day, the Swedish government has not formally acknowledged any of these operations. We are presenting here the first official document confirming the wartime assignment of one of these officers, Nils “Nisse” Johansson.<sup>10</sup> His obituary makes no mention that he was stationed in Hungary in 1944. [Fig. 14, Fig. 15]

The early Swedish-American intelligence interests and activities in Hungary in 1943 – almost a full year before Wallenberg’s diplomatic appointment – give rise to the question if Wallenberg had any knowledge of or connections to these plans and if his selection for the humanitarian mission to Budapest in June 1944, to protect Hungary's Jews from Nazi persecution, was as unexpected as it generally has been portrayed.

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<sup>9</sup> See Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein. *The 1943–1944 Secret Swedish-Hungarian Intelligence Agreement: Possible Implications for the Raoul Wallenberg Case*. Eschenlohe: Buxus Edition, 2020 <https://www.rwi-70.de/publications/books>. Many of the documents referenced in the material from the MUST archive are missing and have not been located so far. They include: 1. Major Gen. István Ujszászy’s request to the Swedish Defense Staff in March 1943, relayed by Lt. Col. Harry Wester, for a Swedish-Hungarian intelligence exchange. 2. A report authored by the Swedish Defense Staff in October 1943, on Soviet espionage operations in Sweden. The report was delivered to the Hungarian Military Attaché Zoltán Vági and through him to the Hungarian General Staff. 3. A letter from Lt. Col. Carl Bonde to Col. Harry Wester in Budapest, from January 25, 1944. It mentions that Bonde planned to send Special Agent of the Swedish Defense Staff Thorsten Akrell to Budapest as early as January 1944. 4. Two messages from the Hungarian resistance group MFM to the Soviet Union, forwarded by the Swedish Legation, Budapest (First Secretary Per Anger), on October 21 and 23, 1944.

<sup>10</sup> In subsequent years, Johansson made a career in the Swedish National Radio Defense Establishment (Försvarets radioanstalt, FRA). During the 1960s, he was suspected of being a Soviet asset. His file with the Swedish Security Police (Säkerhetspolisen, SÄPO) remains classified. The Swedish investigator Anders Jallai who was able to review the file some years ago has published a summary of the content in his online blog <https://www.jallai.se/2013/07/wennerstroms-spionring/>

It is unclear if Swedish officials knew about these operations or Wallenberg's contacts with the Hungarian resistance. Wallenberg's colleagues in Budapest definitely had some information about his activities, especially the First Secretary at the Swedish Legation Per Anger. Staffan Söderblom may have learned about some of Wallenberg's connections when he met the members of the Swedish Legation in Moscow; or possibly even from his discussions with Professor Albert Szent-Györgyi, the famous Hungarian biochemist and Nobel Prize winner, who was the leader of the Taurus resistance group in Budapest.<sup>11</sup> Szent-Györgyi was forced to go underground in 1944 and sought secret refuge for some time with the Swedish Legation.

Both Wallenberg's humanitarian mission in the second half of 1944, as well as his disappearance should now be viewed in this broader and more complex context. Several important questions also remain about the precise actions and motivations of the Wallenberg business family, in particular Marcus and Jacob Wallenberg in the efforts to solve Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance. [Fig. 16]

Wallenberg companies were strongly represented in the planned trade deal and the agreement could not have been concluded without the Wallenbergs' active consent and support. Marcus Wallenberg, in particular, was interested in expanding business contacts with the Soviet Union that, among other goods, included sizable ball bearing deliveries during and after World War II. The Wallenbergs also needed to keep contacts with the Soviet authorities civil and constructive enough to conduct complex negotiating for compensation of their lost businesses throughout Soviet occupied Europe and the Baltic states after World War II.

At the same time, the Wallenberg brothers had to be careful not to offend the US government which was strongly opposed to the deal. The Wallenberg brothers faced an extensive post-war investigation into their business affairs by the U.S. Treasury Department for having supplied Nazi Germany with critical war materials. On the other hand, they also could not risk completely alienating the Swedish government. Already back in September 1945, a high-level Hungarian official informed Swedish representatives that the Soviet authorities had detained Raoul Wallenberg and allegedly planned to use him and his papers in the future trials of "leading persons in trade and finance ... who over five years were German friendly." The news can only have enhanced overall Swedish concerns.

Curiously, Swedish officials apparently told American officials that "even if the information is true ... the Soviets will never produce Wallenberg alive." It is not known what prompted the Swedish remark. [Fig. 17]

Marcus and Jacob did, apparently, try to utilize the opportunity offered by Stalin's conciliatory gesture in the spring of 1946 to inquire about Raoul Wallenberg. As already mentioned, on Staffan Söderblom's urging, Marcus Wallenberg in late May sent a private message to

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<sup>11</sup> See Gellert Kovacs. *Skymning över Budapest: den autentiska historien om Raoul Wallenberg och kampen för människoliv 1944–45* [Twilight over Budapest: The Authentic Story of Raoul Wallenberg and the Struggle for Human Life, 1944–45]. Stockholm: Carlsson, 2013.

Alexandra Kollontay in Moscow. It was a follow-up message to a previous letter Wallenberg had sent to her in April 1945. **Marcus Wallenberg's second letter has not been located in either Swedish or Russian archives and its content is not known.**

On July 4, 1946, shortly after his return from Moscow, Envoy Söderblom met with Jacob Wallenberg. It is not known what the two men discussed but clearly Raoul Wallenberg was almost certainly one of the topics. [Fig. 18]

**In conclusion, the new findings call into question several long held assumptions in the Wallenberg investigation. Specifically, the new insights potentially lead to a reevaluation of the actions of some Swedish officials in the Wallenberg case, in particular Staffan Söderblom, and also other key officials, including Sverker Åström, Sweden's top diplomat in the post-war era.** Åström was stationed in Stockholm during the years 1944-1945, as a chief aide to Erik von Post, head of the Political Department of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In March 1945, Mr. Åström accompanied the Soviet Ambassador Alexandra Kollontay back to Moscow. Åström was directly involved in the Wallenberg investigation for decades and has been suspected of having served an asset of Soviet intelligence throughout his long career.<sup>12</sup> [Fig. 19]

It is well known that Mr. Åström made repeated attempts to obtain access to his personal dossier in the Swedish Security Police (SÄPO). In 2006, he based his request on the then-recent decision by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the case of *Segerstedt-Wiberg et al v. Sweden* (application no. 62332/00). The Court found that SÄPO had violated the personal rights of several Swedish citizens, including their rights to freedom of opinion, expression, and assembly, by mishandling their personal information. The Court ordered the Swedish government to pay compensation to the plaintiffs. However, it upheld SÄPO's right to withhold information it deemed relevant to issues of national security.

This makes SÄPO's subsequent decision to deny Mr. Åström's renewed application potentially meaningful. In its December 2006 response, SÄPO officials cited as a reason for their continued refusal that the content of Mr. Åström's dossier may touch upon the agency's role in "preventing and disclosing violations involving matters of national security". It is known that SÄPO deemed Mr. Åström a security risk due to the fact that he was a homosexual. Nevertheless, given the ECHR's clear 2006 ruling, it would appear that SÄPO could not simply base its decision on aspects concerning Mr. Åström's personal life.

As Raoul Wallenberg's nieces Marie von Dardel-Dupuy and Louise von Dardel stressed in their own application to SÄPO, the role of Mr. Åström must be fully clarified:

76 years after Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance in Hungary, and nine years after Mr. Åström's death, Swedish authorities should disclose once and for all if the allegations against one of Sweden's leading diplomats were true or false. Until then, the shadow of suspicion that undue Soviet influence in the Swedish foreign policy apparatus during the post-war years, and even in more recent times, may have had palpable and potentially detrimental effects on the official Swedish handling of the case of Raoul Wallenberg, one of Sweden's most admired persons,

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<sup>12</sup> Ruling of the European Court of Human Rights from June 6, 2006, [Segerstedt-Wiberg and others v. Sweden, No. 62332/00, ECtHR \(Second Section\), 6 June 2006 \(unimib.it\)](#).

continues to persist. In any other European country such a state of affairs would be a scandal. In Sweden, the unresolved suspicions about Mr. Åström and other officials, like the longtime Swedish Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Rolf Sohlman, have become normalized. This is an unacceptable situation.<sup>13</sup>

The newly released papers also show that Mr. Åström in December 2006 filed a request for unspecified compensation, presumably again based on the ruling of the ECHR earlier that year. In their response, SÄPO officials informed Mr. Åström that they had referred the matter to the legal department of the Swedish National Police Board (*Rikspolisstyrelse, Rättsavdelning*, now part of the Swedish Police Authority) and from there to the Office of the Chancellor of Justice (*Justitiekansler, JK*). In November 2009, the JK ruled that it rejected Mr. Åström's request, arguing that based on a review of his dossier with the Swedish Security Police, his rights had not been violated and he was not entitled to compensation.

**Furthermore, the new findings suggest that in contrast to earlier claims, Sweden's lack of decisive action on Raoul Wallenberg's behalf does not seem to have been simply the result of administrative failures, chaotic post-war conditions, individual incompetence, Wallenberg's status as an "outsider" or Sweden's overwhelming fear of the Soviet Union. It in many ways appears to have been a conscious decision by Swedish decision makers, driven by a variety of motives.** It must be determined if and how the issues outlined above affected the official investigation of the Wallenberg case through the years, including during the 1990s when an official Swedish-Russian Working Group investigated Wallenberg's fate (1991–2000).

## The following questions remain

### In Sweden:

- What was Staffan Söderblom perception of Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance? Why was he convinced already in April 1945 that Raoul Wallenberg was dead? In particular, what did Raoul Wallenberg's colleagues tell Envoy Söderblom about Raoul Wallenberg when they met him in Moscow in April 1945?
- How did the meeting with Stalin come about and what was the purpose of the meeting?
- What were Envoy Söderblom's intentions in the meeting with Stalin? In a radio interview in 1981, he gave a spirited defense of his actions, saying that he was sure that Swedish officials had done everything possible to solve Wallenberg's disappearance.
- Did Staffan Söderblom receive instructions before his meeting with Stalin and, if so, from whom?
- If he was briefed or instructed, then numerous additional questions arise:

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<sup>13</sup> An application to Klas Friberg, Director of SÄPO, by Marie von Dardel-Dupuy and Louise von Dardel dated June 6, 2021.

Why has this fact not emerged earlier; who had knowledge about these instructions, in 1946 and in subsequent years? And why did neither Söderblom nor anyone else ever reveal this fact?

- Why did Swedish officials in the Swedish Working Group Report (2000) suggest that Söderblom suffered from “lack of judgment” and an early onset of mental illness if they knew from his personnel file in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the reasons for the mental breakdown, he suffered in 1951 apparently had other causes?
- Why did the Eliasson Commission report misrepresent and omit key facts about the Swedish-Soviet credit and trade agreement?
- What role did Marcus and Jacob Wallenberg play after Raoul Wallenberg’s disappearance? Why did they not or push to resolve the question of Raoul Wallenberg’s fate when the trade agreement was concluded and when the meeting with Stalin did not produce a result?
- Why did Swedish diplomats tell U.S. officials as early as September 1945 – only nine months after Raoul Wallenberg’s disappearance - that even if he were alive and imprisoned in the Soviet Union, it was doubtful that the Soviets would “ever produce Wallenberg alive”? Did Swedish representatives fear that Wallenberg perhaps could be used in future Soviet trials of “leading persons in trade and finance ... who over five years were German friendly”, as had been alleged by a high-level Hungarian official?
- What did Sverker Åström know or learn about the internal discussions in 1944-1946 about Raoul Wallenberg when he served in the Political Department of the Swedish Foreign Ministry in Stockholm and what was his role in the Wallenberg case in subsequent years?
- What did Swedish officials and key decision makers know about Swedish intelligence operations in Hungary? Where are the records of the communications handled by Swedish signal intelligence officers? Where are the communications Per Anger dealt with on behalf of the MFM?

### **In Russia:**

It is important to note that quite crucial additional information, with direct relevance to the Wallenberg case exists and should be released from Russian archives. Many discussions and deliberations undoubtedly were conducted orally, and document destruction undoubtedly occurred. However, there are strong indications that key records and information about the decision-making process in the Wallenberg case have been preserved. (We will address this issue in detail in Part 2 of this hearing)

Aside from the FSB Central Archive, this concerns also especially the Russian Federation Foreign Policy Archive (AVPRF, formerly the Russian Foreign Ministry Archive):

- Several important missing records concerning the creation of the so-called Vyshinsky Note of August 1947, a key document in the Raoul Wallenberg case, i.e., Yakov Malik's preparation of the draft of the Vyshinsky Note, as well as an unknown document [extract] referenced by Andrei Vyshinsky in the text of the Note
- originals of several official Swedish diplomatic notes re Raoul Wallenberg, with distribution lists (some of the provided copies did not reproduce the names of the recipients in full during Xerox copying)
- MID's correspondence regarding the fate of the Swedish Mission diplomats [Raoul Wallenberg's colleagues] detained near Budapest
- The complete correspondence of the MID with the former Soviet Ambassador in Sweden Alexandra Kollontay during the years 1945-47. Only one example of such records has been released so far.
- The released in 2021 of NKID documentation re the decision to send the Swedish diplomats of the Swedish Legation in Budapest (except Wallenberg) back to Sweden in 1945 shows that an intense internal and external NKID's correspondence preceded this decision. If such correspondence, especially with the NKID Legal Department, exists, it should be presented.

Key records should also exist in other archives, including the Presidential Archive, for example.

- Why did Stalin order Wallenberg's detention and why did he not release him?
- What did Raoul Wallenberg's colleagues report to Soviet officials in February-March 1945 while being detained?
- Why did Raoul Wallenberg supposedly inform Soviet officers in Hungary that he wished not only to meet Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, Commander of the Soviet 2nd Ukrainian Front in Hungary, but through him "make contact with Moscow, or to get to Moscow" (as was reported by Colonel Ivan Golub, the commander of the Red Army's 581st Rifle Regiment, one of the first Soviet officers Wallenberg encountered in Budapest)? And why was this information not included in any of the official Swedish reports in the Wallenberg investigation?
- What did the Soviet side know in advance about Söderblom's meeting with Stalin? If the meeting was planned, why has the Russian side not released any information about this fact? How did Stalin and the Soviet leadership interpret Söderblom's statements to several Soviet representatives during the period of December 1945-1946 (when he made repeated requests to declare Raoul Wallenberg dead)?
- What was Alexandra Kollontay's role in 1945-46 in Moscow? What did she report to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs about her discussions with Söderblom and other Swedish representative (Staffan Söderblom in 1945-46; Sverker Åström in March - April 1945; the Swedish Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow in 1946 Barck-Holst, and so on) and what instructions did she receive from her superiors?

- Why has the Russian side not released key records of the Soviet Ministry of Trade about the Swedish-Soviet credit and trade negotiations in 1946, and about the Wallenberg business family, including Raoul Wallenberg? This material is needed to understand what background information Stalin potentially possessed about the Wallenberg business family and, possibly, about Raoul Wallenberg himself at the time of Wallenberg's disappearance. (The Wallenberg business family had a long presence in the Soviet Union and the influential banker Marcus Wallenberg, Raoul Wallenberg's relative, had played a central role in negotiating the Finnish-Soviet Peace in 1944).



## Session II (*Vadim Birstein and Susanne Berger*)

### **An Inquiry Steered from The Top? Important Gaps in the Official Russian Wallenberg Case Record [Fig. 20]**

In many ways, the work of the First International Commission on the fate of Raoul Wallenberg in 1990-91, headed by Wallenberg's half-brother Professor Guy von Dardel, as well as the Swedish-Russian Working Group (1991-2000) constituted a true pioneering effort of foreign researchers working in Russian archives, including receiving copies of, and reviewing selected original records from the FSB Central Archive. [Fig. 21]

We want to stress emphatically that the criticisms expressed are not aimed to deny previous efforts and achievements, but to show that they were incomplete, and the most crucial details of the Wallenberg case still need serious attention. At the same time, it must also be said that the work was marred by serious problems and missteps.

There are strong indications that both Swedish and Russian officials intentionally kept the focus of the Wallenberg investigation very narrow, misrepresented and omitted important details and information in the case from their respective official reports, and failed to provide access to key documentation to researchers and Wallenberg's family.

There were very early indications, that Russian officials were not ready to provide full access to all information about Raoul Wallenberg's fate. Already in 1991, during what was considered a relatively open period for historical research, KGB officials stopped the review of prisoner files by two members of the First International Commission on the Fate of Raoul Wallenberg, Vadim Birstein and Arseny Roginsky, members of the Memorial Society in Moscow.<sup>14</sup> In their review, Birstein and Roginsky had discovered the first mention that Wallenberg had been moved to Cell 7 of Lubyanka Prison (this information led to the discussion of Prisoner no. 7), and the first proof of Vilmos Langfelder's imprisonment in the Soviet Union, in the Special Archive (now the Russian State Military Archive, RGVA).<sup>15</sup> At the time, the head of this Archive, Anatoly Prokopenko, informed the Swedish side of the KGB order to shut down the inquiry. However, Swedish officials did not make the information public or formally protest the decision. Mr. Prokopenko's report should have served as a warning sign that official Russian cooperation in the Wallenberg inquiry was still very much restricted.

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<sup>14</sup> Louise Nordstrom. "Document backs claims KGB stopped Wallenberg probe." *Huffpost World*, January 12, 2012, <https://www.raoulwallenberg.net/news/document-backs-claims-kgb-stopped-wallenberg-probe/>.

<sup>15</sup> Vadim Birstein. "The Secret of Cell Number Seven: The Mysterious Fate of An 'Extremely Important Prisoner'" (1991), <http://www.vbirstein.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/The-Secret-of-Cell-Number-Seven.pdf>.

During the 1990s, the Russian government intensified its efforts to use legislation to restrict access to information. Adopted in 1993 the Law on State Secrets no. 5485-1 (<https://www.zakonrf.info/doc-13426243/>) led to re-classification of records that had become accessible immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This law has been supplemented and expanded with numerous provisions several times since then.

Additionally, it appears that Russia engaged in an active campaign of disinformation during the 1990s and through the 2000s, in order to influence the Wallenberg investigation at crucial moments. As noted earlier today, it is quite obvious that Russian authorities know much more about Raoul Wallenberg and what happened to him than they have revealed so far.

**Therefore, this is the core problem that has persisted in the Wallenberg investigation for decades: Russian officials, in particular those of the FSB, emphatically claim that it is clear that Raoul Wallenberg died in 1947 and that they possess no more information or documentation that could shed light on the exact circumstances of Raoul Wallenberg's fate. They argue that the only way any progress in the matter can be made is if new details surface by accident. For their part, Swedish authorities have essentially accepted the Russian government's position. As a result, the Wallenberg investigation has been stuck in a nearly complete impasse ever since 2000 when the Working Group concluded its official investigation.**

**In addition, researchers had to deal with two other fundamental problems which persist today:**

### **1. The lack of access to original, uncensored documentation**

Copies of documents that are crucial for the case and that were released from the FSB Central Archive during the years of the Swedish-Russian Working Group were heavily censored before Xerox copying. [Fig. 22 and Fig. 23] Only certain extracts from a document, and sometimes not even a full entry in a registration book, for example, were copied. The Swedish side accepted this format, which would be unacceptable in any scientific research. A big problem was also the fact that the Swedish Working Group did not appoint any professional historian or researcher who was fluent in Russian. They regularly consulted with such experts, but they did not formally include them in the Working Group. Another problem is that Swedish officials accepted most of documentation without proper archival reference information (except for documents from the Russian Federation Foreign Policy Archive) which makes it impossible to trace them in a particular archive for a detailed study.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> An example is a centrally important cable by Matvei Zakharov, head of the Staff of the 2nd Ukrainian Front, to the General Staff in Moscow dated January 15, 1945, which says that Wallenberg had been located. Part of it on

## **2. The complexity of the Soviet Administrative system, including the multiple changes of the structure of the Soviet Security Services as well as the Soviet Prison System during the years 1945-1953.<sup>17</sup>**

This complexity provides huge challenges for researchers but also important opportunities for tracking down additional information. We will discuss this issue in some detail below.

All this allowed Russian officials to keep a tight control over the investigation, by providing only a highly selective set of materials. It also made the independent verification of information provided by the Russian side virtually impossible. The missing documentation is needed to solve the fundamental unanswered questions in the Wallenberg case:

- Why exactly was Raoul Wallenberg detained in Hungary in 1945?
- How did Stalin and the Soviet leadership might have assessed his case?
- And what happened to Raoul Wallenberg after March 1947, when his trail breaks off in the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison in Moscow?

Raoul Wallenberg's family and researchers have argued for years that there are many reasons to be skeptical of Russian claims that no additional information at all exists about Raoul Wallenberg or his fate in Russian archives. Recently, new information has come to light that lends even greater urgency to researchers' requests for direct access and full disclosure of specific records, in Russia as well as in Sweden. [\[Attachment 3\]](#)

Since our time is limited, we would like to demonstrate this urgency with the help of a few select examples.

### **Records of the Russian State Security Service (FSB)**

#### **Prisoner no 7.**

#### **Swedish officials did not press Russian authorities to reveal important details about an unidentified Prisoner no. 7 who may have been Raoul Wallenberg**

Soviet and later Russian officials withheld for decades information about a still unidentified Prisoner no. 7 who was interrogated in the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison in late July 1947 and who

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the left side under the main text was deleted during Xerox copying and it is clear that the original should be inspected. However, a copy of the cable was accepted simply as a document from the Central Archive of the Defense Ministry (TsAMO) and it would be difficult to find it again in that archive without archival registration information.

<sup>17</sup> The complexity of changes of the structure of the Soviet Security Services in the 1940s–50s are discussed, in detail, in Vadim Birstein. *SMERSH, Stalin's Secret Weapon: Soviet Military Counterintelligence in WWII*. London: Biteback Publishing Ltd., 2012.

may have been Raoul Wallenberg. Only in 2009 did the FSB release the information to two researchers (Birstein/Berger), a full ten years after the end of the official Working Group inquiry.

The decision not to release this information was most likely motivated by the wish not to draw public attention to any data that could possibly challenge the official Soviet version of Wallenberg's death on July 17, 1947.<sup>18</sup>

The prisoner in question was first interrogated in the presence of Wallenberg's long-term cellmate Willy Rödel on July 22, 1947. The next day, on July 23, 1947, Prisoner no. 7 was interrogated again, this time together with the Hungarian citizen Vilmos Langfelder, Wallenberg's driver, for more than 16 and a half hours. According to FSB archivists, Prisoner no. 7 was "with great likelihood [...] the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg." If true, it would mean Wallenberg was alive at least six days after his official date of death. [Fig. 24]

When Swedish officials learned of this sensational information in 2009, they did very little to press Russian officials to provide access to the documentation that could help to establish the identity of Prisoner no. 7. If they were dismayed that the Russian side had withheld the information, they did not show it, and worse, did not publicly express it. Sweden's then-Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt and Foreign Minister Carl Bildt who met with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in November 2009 and again in early 2010, did not take up the new findings in their formal discussions but simply chose to remind the Russian side to ensure that scholars be granted adequate access to key archival collections.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that Swedish representatives devoted very little effort to follow up information that was potentially the most important lead to emerge in the Wallenberg case since 1957 is both surprising and troubling. The decision by the Russian side to withhold these crucial documents was clearly intentional and had serious consequences. Even if Prisoner no. 7 was not Raoul Wallenberg, obtaining full information about this person would be a matter of vital importance for the Wallenberg investigation.

It is unclear at this point if Swedish officials knew about Prisoner no. 7 as early as the 1990s.<sup>20</sup> As just mentioned, during the time of the Working Group, Russian officials provided only heavily

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<sup>18</sup> Russian officials did not disclose the information that a Prisoner no. 7 was, in fact, interrogated on July 22 and 23, 1947, together with Vilmos Langfelder, even when a former MGB investigator told the Swedish-Russian Working Group that Raoul Wallenberg had possibly been held some of the time as Prisoner no. 7 during his imprisonment. Based on Birstein and Roginsky's discoveries in the Special Archive in 1991, it was known that Wallenberg had been held in cell number 7 in the Lubyanka Prison after his transfer from Lefortovo Prison in March 1947.

<sup>19</sup> Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Stockholm on November 18, 2009. Carl Bildt and Fredrik Reinfeldt again met with him on March 11, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> The FSB archivists stated the following in a letter to Vadim Birstein and Susanne Berger in 2012: "Copies from the registers of registration of calls prisoners for interrogation in Lefortovo and Internal prisons of July 22-23, 1947,

censored copies of the interrogation registers for the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison. However, in 1992, according to his own statements, Ambassador Hans Magnusson, Chairman of the Swedish side of the Swedish-Russian Working Group, was allowed to inspect the Lubyanka Prison interrogation registers for the years 1945–49. Ambassador Magnusson apparently did not notice or report any entries for a Prisoner no. 7 on July 22-23, 1947. Requests by researchers, as well as by Guy von Dardel – a full member of the Working Group – to review the interrogation registers themselves or to obtain an uncensored copy of the full line-up of prisoners called for interrogation on the days of July 22-23, 1947, were repeatedly ignored by both Swedish and Russian officials. Continued FSB refusals to provide such direct access resulted in Marie von Dardel-Dupuy's decision to sue the agency in 2017.<sup>21</sup> It is important to see the full notations of the entry.

**Swedish officials already in 2011 received direct confirmation from the former deputy head of the FSB Registration and Archival Collections Directorate (URAF) and a veteran of the KGB/FSB Central Archive, Col. Vladimir Vinogradov, that Raoul Wallenberg was identical with a Prisoner no. 7 who was held in the Internal (Lubyanka) prison in Moscow in July 1947.**

The information emerged as part of a preliminary review of the newly released 40,000 documents in the official Raoul Wallenberg case file of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and documentation made available by Swedish officials, as part of the follow-up requests, we placed regarding some apparent gaps in the released material.

**On October 12, 2011, Col. Vinogradov told a representative of the Swedish Embassy, Moscow during a screening of a Wallenberg documentary at the Sakharov Center, that "Wallenberg not only "could" have been interrogated on the 23rd [of July 1947], but that this was so, it was *tochno [certainly so]*." [Fig. 25] Vinogradov offered no supporting evidence for his claim. Swedish diplomats immediately reported Vinogradov's statements to Stockholm, but Swedish officials apparently took no further action. Instead, they classified the document and did not inform Raoul Wallenberg's family or researchers about the new information they had received.**

The new documentation also shows that a year later, in November 2012, Lt. General Vasily Khristoforov, at the time head of the FSB URAF and Mr. Vinogradov's superior, considered "a possible hypothesis" that Raoul Wallenberg could be identical with Prisoner no. 7. [Fig. 26]

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were given to the Swedish side during the work of the Russian-Swedish Commission on establishing the fate R. Wallenberg" (Letter 10/A-2333 dated May 11, 2012). This statement has not been confirmed and needs to be clarified.

<sup>21</sup> Marie Dupuy, "Why I decided to sue the FSB in a quest for the truth about Raoul Wallenberg", *The Local*, August 22, 2017 <https://www.thelocal.se/20170822/why-i-decided-to-sue-the-russian-fsb-in-a-quest-for-the-truth-about-raoul-wallenberg/>.

Khristoforov made his comments in a meeting with Ambassador Hans Magnusson, the former Chairman of the Swedish side of the Swedish-Russian Working Group that investigated the fate of Raoul Wallenberg in Russian during the 1990s. Col. Vinogradov also was in attendance.

According to Mr. Magnusson's memorandum of the discussion, Khristoforov freely expressed his personal view "that Raoul Wallenberg could have been alive after the [official death] date of July 17, 1947, stated in the so-called Smoltsov Report, but in such a case only for a few weeks."<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, Ambassador Magnusson did not ask Lt. Gen. Khristoforov on what evidence he based this claim.

The Smoltsov Report remains currently the only direct official information/document presented by Soviet and later Russian authorities about what supposedly happened to Raoul Wallenberg in 1947. Since its release in 1957, it has remained unclear when and where, in what KGB archival file, the report was found and exactly when it was created. If Prisoner no. 7 was, in fact, Raoul Wallenberg, the Smoltsov Report would have to be considered an intentional deception or an outright fake. [Fig. 27]

Once again, Swedish officials did not pass on the new information to Raoul Wallenberg's family or researchers. Ambassador Magnusson's December 2012 memorandum was also not placed among the 40,000 pages released by UD in 2019. And none of the information was included in Ambassador Magnusson's 2012 official review of the Wallenberg case. [Attachment 4] In fact, in his report Mr. Magnusson stated that Lt. Gen. Khristoforov had downplayed the possibility that Raoul Wallenberg was identical with Prisoner no. 7, which was not correct. Instead, Khristoforov had merely added that – in his view – it was not possible to determine precisely if Raoul Wallenberg was identical with Prisoner no. 7 (of July 22 and 23, 1947) since additional documentation was lacking.

Lt. Gen. Khristoforov subsequently rejected Ambassador Magnusson's request to review the original pages in the Lubyanka prison register for July 22 and 23, 1947, showing Prisoner no. 7's calls for interrogation, citing Russian secrecy laws. Swedish officials did not seriously protest the decision and apparently did not pursue the issue further. Since then, Swedish Foreign Ministry officials have consistently rejected requests from Raoul Wallenberg's family to directly request the information themselves from Russian authorities.

**If, as they claim, Russian officials have nothing to hide, why did they withhold the information about Prisoner no. 7 until 2009, when they have known about the information for decades? Did they feel that revealing this information would almost certainly attract unwelcome international publicity? Or did they believe - as Lt. General Khristoforov phrased**

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<sup>22</sup> Khristoforov was referring to the report by A. L. Smoltsov, head of the Medical Unit of the Lubyanka Prison, in which Smoltsov claims that Wallenberg died of sudden cardiac arrest in his prison cell.

**it in his conversation with Ambassador Magnusson in 2012 - that the fact that Raoul Wallenberg was apparently alive six days after his official death date of July 17, 1947, was meaningless, because it did not alter the fact that Wallenberg definitely died in 1947?**

**All this leads to the question: Do Russian officials actually know what happened to Raoul Wallenberg? In several official statements in the 1990s, including by the former FSB Director Sergei Stepashin (during Russian President Boris Yeltsin's official visit to Sweden in 1997) Russian officials claimed that Wallenberg was killed (some sources stated that he was shot to death), without presenting any evidence.**

Extensive document destruction definitely occurred during the mid-1950s, on the orders of the Soviet leadership, including the former first KGB Chief Ivan Serov. At the same time, it has become very clear that Russian officials have more information about the Wallenberg case than they have previously shared with the public. This apparently concerns not only documentation kept in the FSB archives, but also in those of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian Military Prosecutor's Office, and the Presidential Archive.

Since 1991, many Russian archivists have spent hours attempting to answer the questions posed by researchers and Swedish representatives. It remains a fact, however, that not all Russian archivists and officials possess an in-depth knowledge or understanding of the Wallenberg case. Similarly, many Swedish officials who come in contact with the issue lack a deeper understanding of the details of the case. This is especially true for the younger generation of diplomats and archivists, on both sides. As a result, the most precise and sensitive knowledge remains today confined to a very small circle of individuals.

#### **The memoirs of Pavel Sudoplatov and Ivan Serov: possible attempts at Russian disinformation**

**Swedish officials knew that Soviet State Security Official Lt. General Pavel Sudoplatov lied in his widely publicized 1994 memoir about the alleged poisoning death of Raoul Wallenberg but did not share the information with the public.**

Documentation obtained from Swedish and Russian archives calls into serious question the claims made by the former Soviet state security official Lt. General Pavel Sudoplatov in his 1994 memoir that Raoul Wallenberg was allegedly poisoned by Grigory Mairanovsky, head of the secret MGB Toxicological Laboratory (Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoli Sudoplatov, with Jerrold L. and Leona P. Schecter. *Special Tasks*, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1994). [Fig. 28] In fact, when questioned by Swedish representatives, Sudoplatov frankly admitted in writing that he had no personal knowledge about Wallenberg and his case, and that he based his claims entirely on information he had obtained from Russian media reports in the early 1990s. For still unexplained reasons Swedish officials did not mention Sudoplatov's clarifications when his

memoir was published in 1994 or in the final Swedish Working Group Report released in 2000. This failure led to the inclusion of Sudoplatov's pure speculations as a supposedly serious witness testimony in many publications about Raoul Wallenberg.<sup>23</sup> [Attachment 5]

Additionally, Sudoplatov was not merely an outside observer of Mairanovsky's activities. Instead, from 1946 to 1950, Mairanovsky poisoned numerous people on direct orders of Sudoplatov, who knew the background and the names of Mairanovsky's victims.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, if Stalin had ordered Sudoplatov to kill Raoul Wallenberg, and Mairanovsky had carried out the murder, Sudoplatov would have known about it. He would not merely hypothesize about the killing in his book. Already in 1966, while himself imprisoned, Sudoplatov outlined in great detail to the Party leadership other killings and his key role in them. He never mentioned Raoul Wallenberg's name in any of his statements. In fact, it appears that the primary intention behind Sudoplatov's 1994 claims was to indirectly confirm the official Soviet government version of Wallenberg's fate in order to prejudice or limit the Wallenberg investigation at that time. The Soviet authorities announced in 1957 that Wallenberg had died suddenly at age 34 in his prison cell on July 17, 1947, supposedly of natural causes, as a result of a heart attack - a highly suspicious scenario.

However, Sudoplatov's lies do not eliminate the possibility that Raoul Wallenberg died or was killed in 1947. Most likely, the goal of the Soviet 1957 version and Sudoplatov's more recent claims was to cover up the true time and cause of Raoul Wallenberg's death. The Swedish-Russian Working Group conducted interviews with Pavel Sudoplatov and his son Anatoli, a KGB Lt. Colonel in reserve, who compiled much of the material for his father's 1994 memoir. The transcripts of these interviews remain currently classified, as do those of other former members of the Soviet and later, the Russian state security services.

A "support" of Sudoplatov's version of killing Wallenberg by Mairanovsky appeared in the alleged memoir by Ivan Serov, the first KGB Chairman (from 1954 to 1958), published in Russian in 2016, long time after Serov's death in 1990. This version stated: "The interrogated Mairanovsky and the workers of his special laboratory cell confirmed that in 1946-1947 they liquidated a number of foreign citizens who were in the internal Lubyanka and Vladimir prisons of the MGB. They did not know specific names." However, in the version of this chapter that Nigel Bance, a British author, received in Moscow in 2002 with the help of Anatoli Sudoplatov

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<sup>23</sup> [EXCLUSIVE: General Pavel Sudoplatov lied about the alleged poisoning death of Raoul Wallenberg - Buxus Stiftung \(fritz-bauer-forum.de\)](http://www.fritz-bauer-forum.de). See also a longer analysis by Vadim Birstein: Vadim Birstein. "[The Wallenberg Case: General Sudoplatov's Lies and the Silence of the FSB](http://www.vbirstein.com/2019/07/17/sudaplatovs-lies/)" (<http://www.vbirstein.com/2019/07/17/sudaplatovs-lies/>).

The Chairman of the Swedish Working Group Hans Magnusson shared a copy of Sudoplatov's statement with Guy von Dardel, but the issue was never discussed in detail and the information was not released.

<sup>24</sup> On the history of Mairanovsky's laboratory, see Vadim Birstein. *The Perversion of Knowledge: The True History of Soviet Science*. Boulder (CO): Westview Press, 2001. Pp. 81–177.



(whom Bance calls “the prodigious fixer”), the name of Mairanovsky was absent. Bance’s book was also published in 2016, a few months before the Russian version. Therefore, Mairanovsky’s name appeared in the text after 2002. There are other inconsistencies between the 2002 and 2016 versions. Clearly, the text was adjusted before its publication in 2016. The fact that the Swedish side did not reveal Sudoplatov’s testimony of 1994, that he learned about Wallenberg only in the early 1990s from the Russian press, made possible this new lie in Serov’s so-called “memoir.”<sup>25</sup> [Attachment 6]

## **Files of Raoul Wallenberg’s cellmate Willy Rödel and other individuals associated with the Wallenberg case**

### **a. Willy Rödel**

Several years ago, researchers learned that contrary to previous claims, the archival file of Raoul Wallenberg’s longtime cellmate, the German diplomat and intelligence man Willy Rödel, has been largely preserved. [Fig. 29] This fact and other archival data strongly suggest that similar investigative material was also created in the Wallenberg case. Some of this documentation may have been destroyed, but some of it may well continue to exist to this day.

For many years researchers have repeatedly asked the FSB Central Archive about the file of Wallenberg’s longtime cellmate, Willy Rödel:

1) To show the original collection/file from which the few documents about Rödel that had been previously released supposedly originate. Russian officials indicated that this documentation is kept in a so-called “operative correspondence file” (PF-9653) that contains correspondence between prison officials and the 3rd MGB Main Directorate (military counterintelligence) about imprisoned foreign diplomats. The FSB would not allow researchers to inspect the original documents.

2) To inspect a few pages that were released to the Swedish side of the Working Group (medical documents regarding Rödel’s death) as copies without page numbers. The archivists finally informed researchers about the page numbers, but never showed the originals.

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<sup>25</sup> Vadim Birstein and Susanne Berger. “[A Cold War Execution Most Foul? Too Early to Close the Book on the Raoul Wallenberg Case](https://warontherocks.com/2016/09/a-cold-war-execution-most-foul-too-early-to-close-the-book-on-the-raoul-wallenberg-case/)” (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/09/a-cold-war-execution-most-foul-too-early-to-close-the-book-on-the-raoul-wallenberg-case/>). See also a longer analysis of Ivan Serov’s memoir by Vadim Birstein: Vadim Birstein. [Raoul Wallenberg in Ivan Serov’s Memoir](http://www.vbirstein.com/serov-memoir-book-review/)” (<http://www.vbirstein.com/serov-memoir-book-review/>); Vadim Birstein. “The Wallenberg Chapter: Serov’s Original Typed Manuscript Translated” (<http://www.vbirstein.com/the-wallenberg-chapter-the-original-typed-manuscript-translated/>).

FSB archivists claimed for years that this file PF-9653 contained no further information about Rödel than that which had been previously released and that none of Rödel's interrogation documents could be located. [Fig. 30]

In November 2009, the FSB officials suddenly informed two researchers (Birstein/Berger) that, in fact, some of transcripts of Rödel's interrogations did exist. Two of Rödel's statements to his interrogators were published in Russian in 2011 in the book *Secrets of the Third Reich Diplomacy: German Diplomats, Leaders of Foreign Military Missions, Military and Police Attachés in Soviet Captivity. Documents from Investigation Files. 1944-1955*, edited by Lt. General Vasily Khristoforov (Moscow: Demokratiya Publ.), pp. 423–24 (in Russian).<sup>26</sup> This seems to indicate that large parts of Willy Rödel's file have indeed survived. It raises the important question whether similar documents have been preserved for other prisoners closely connected to the Wallenberg case, including Wallenberg himself.

Rödel's file is especially significant because, as the Russian historian Nikita Petrov of the Moscow Memorial Society has discovered, it belongs to a group of files of the liquidated (secretly executed) persons.<sup>27</sup> However officially, Rödel "died of a heart paralysis," which reminds of the Wallenberg case. According to Col. Vladimir Vinogradov, deputy head of the FSB Directorate of Registration and Archival Collections, the same PF-9653 file contains materials of the case of former Hungarian Prime Minister Count István Bethlen who died in the Butyrka Prison Hospital in 1946.<sup>28</sup>

It is worth noting that the last page number in Rödel's file is written on an envelope that contains, among other things, his prisoner card and diplomatic passport. This fact raises the question whether Raoul Wallenberg's prisoner card and diplomatic passport released in 1989 were located in a similar collection of documents.

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<sup>26</sup> Former military intelligence officer, Lt. Gen. Vasilii Stepanovich Khristoforov headed the FSB Directorate of Registration and Archival Collections (*Управление регистрации и архивных фондов ФСБ РФ*) or URAF from 2001 to 2016. Earlier, from 1992 to 1995, during the first years of work of the Swedish-Russian Group, Lt. Gen. Ya. F. Pogony headed the URAF. Some important materials about Wallenberg were released from the FSB Central Archive during Pogony's tenure. N. P. Mikheikin headed the FSB Central Archive within the URAF.

<sup>27</sup> Nikita Petrov. *First KGB Chairman Ivan Serov* (Moscow: Materik, 2005). P. 158 (in Russian). Ivan Serov (1905-1990) was KGB Chairman from 1954 to 1958.

<sup>28</sup> Unlike the cases of Wallenberg and Rödel, on order from Moscow by Abakumov's deputy Isai Babich, on February 26, 1945, Count István Bethlen was arrested by operatives of the SMERSH Directorate of the 3rd Ukrainian Front, and he was sent to Moscow as an arrestee. His investigation materials survived, and copies of these materials were handed over to the Hungarian officials in 1992. Also, the Hungarians received a separate block of transcripts of interrogations of Count Bethlen by officers of the Political Directorate of that Front, and their correspondence with the headquarters of the Main Political Directorate in Moscow (these materials were published in the Hungarian translation: Györkei Jenő. "Bethlen-dokumentumok Moszkvából." *Történelmi Szemle*. Vol. 36 (1994). Nos. 3–4. Pp. 334–350). Additionally, the AVPRF released a correspondence between MID and MGB regarding Bethlen. During an appointment with Stalin on April 10, 1946, Ferenc Nagy, Hungarian Prime Minister, stated that it would be the best if Bethlen did not come back to Hungary. According to medical documents in his file, on October 5, 1946, Bethlen died in the Butyrka Prison Hospital of "cardiac failure."

Rödel's documents should be made available for review for a simple reason that Wallenberg's longtime cellmate was executed (most probably, poisoned) on October 15, 1947, a few months after Wallenberg's own trail breaks off in Lubyanka Prison. The documentation could provide important clues about how sensitive cases like his and that of Raoul Wallenberg were handled by the Soviet security apparatus at the time.

In 2012, the FSB published a compilation of documents entitled *SA Oberführer Willy Rödel: Documents from the FSB Archives of Russia*, edited by Lt. Gen. Khristoforov.<sup>29</sup> The book included documents from not only the file PF-9653, but also from two other archival files (Fond 16. Opis' 32 «Ye». Delo 235; Fond 53. Opis' 1. Delo. 317), which previously have never been mentioned by FSB archivists. Furthermore, the publication of these documents does not replace the necessity of inspecting the originals.

A short review conducted in 1993 of a two-volume report by a Special Commission headed by Nikolai Arzhannikov, at the time deputy chair of the Committee on Human Rights at the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation, showed that Rödel's unknown file apparently included an important document in the Wallenberg case, a copy of the Vyshinsky Note dated August 18, 1947. This note stated that "Wallenberg is not in the Soviet Union, and he is not known to us. It remains only to assume that Wallenberg was killed or captured by Hungarian Nazis."

The FSB claims that the file PF-9653 (which contains Rödel's file) does not include such a copy of the Vyshinsky Note. However, the review in 1992 of the volumes Arzhannikov's Special Commission suggests that this particular copy of the Note originated from some type of Rödel's file. It carries Abakumov's handwritten instruction "Comrade Kartashov should be acquainted with this." Sergei Kartashov headed the MGB investigation department that conducted the investigation of both Wallenberg and Rödel's cases from 1945–47. The placement of a copy of the Vyshinsky Note (only 14 copies were typed originally for the highest Soviet leaders) in Rödel's file in August 1947 would underscore the close link between his and Wallenberg's case.<sup>30</sup>

A review of the previously classified interrogation transcripts with former Soviet state security officers in 1991–1993 revealed that Willy Rödel was initially held in Soviet imprisonment under

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<sup>29</sup> The title of the book in Russian is: *Оберфюрер СА Вилли Редель. Документы из архивов ФСБ России*. Отв. редактор В. С. Христофоров, авт.-сост. В. Г. Макаров, В. С. Христофоров. М.: Изд-во Главного архивного управления г. Москвы, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, the copy of the Commission's report that Dr. Birstein briefly inspected in 1992, was destroyed in the fire in the Russian Councils Building ("White House") in 1993 that started after Russian tanks fired at this building. It is extremely important to find and check the other copies of the 2-volume materials of the Arzhannikov Commission if they exist.

the name of "von Oertzke".<sup>31</sup> This information was not presented in any documentation that has been released or published about Rödel by the FSB. Apparently, this detail is given in the records that have remained inaccessible to researchers. One possibility is Rödel's so-called "Working Agent File" (*Agenturnoe delo*) – a separate file created by MGB investigators to collect the reports of a particular cell spy.

#### **b. Other Individuals Associated with the Raoul Wallenberg Case**

FSB archivists have also not permitted independent access to the Archival-Investigation files of several other prisoners associated with the Wallenberg case.

Without examining the Archival-Investigation files of such prisoners as Hermann Grosheim-Krisko (Tomsen), who worked at the Swedish Legation in Budapest in 1944 and who was interrogated about Wallenberg many times, of the cellmates of Wallenberg and Vilmos Langfelder, Wallenberg's driver, like Gustav Richter, Horst Kitschmann, Ernst Huber, as well as known cell spies as Hans Loyda, Erhard Hille, and Walter Schlitter-Scheuer (Schlueter), the study of the Wallenberg case cannot be considered complete. These files are kept in the FSB Central Archive in Moscow. Of special interest is also the file of Ottó Hatz-Hátszeghy, the Hungarian Military Attaché to Sofia from 1941 and to Ankara from 1943.

In this respect the so-called Working Agent files of cell spies could be especially informative. These files have never been destroyed. However, they also have never been declassified. In one of his interviews, Lt. Gen. Khristoforov said: "A Working Agent File can be declassified only [...] at the personal written request of the agent himself. At the same time, the file itself cannot be handed over to him. [...] To my recollection, there were no such requests."<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it is definitely hard to receive access to these files in Russia.

During the 1990s, Ambassador Magnusson, as Chairman of the Swedish Working Group, was allowed to review some of the Archival-Investigation files (however, not the Working Agent files) of the prisoners listed above in the FSB Central Archive. However, this archive has so far not allowed independent researchers to study these files in full. In the cases of Langfelder and his cell-mate Sandor Katona, FSB archivists claim that no other materials except records about days, time and names of interrogators have survived at all, which is unlikely.

FSB archivists for years have claimed that no archival-investigation files were created for Raoul Wallenberg and Vilmos Langfelder because they were not formally arrested, i.e., SMERSH/MGB

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<sup>31</sup> Nikolai Arzhannikov and Andrei Ziborov, a KGB representative, asked Kartashov's former officer Boris Solovov about Rödel as "Oertzke" in an interview on October 1, 1991. Björn Lyrvall, 2nd Secretary of the Swedish Embassy in Moscow, was also present.

<sup>32</sup> "There are lovers not looking for the truth but digging in the 'dirty linen.'" [an interview with Vasilii Khristoforov, head of the FSB URAF]. *Interfax.ru*, December 18, 2008 (in Russian), <https://www.interfax.ru/interview/52385>.

arrest warrants were not issued for them. The discovery of the material for Willy Rödel, who was also formally not arrested, raises the question whether similar documentation may also have been preserved for Wallenberg and Langfelder. As mentioned in the section below, certain items among Raoul Wallenberg's possessions that were returned to his family in 1989 would have been originally kept in his investigation file.

### **The Murder of Isai Oggins, an American Citizen, in 1947: A Parallel Case to Raoul Wallenberg**

Soviet and Russian officials repeatedly pointed to the similarities between the Wallenberg case and his presumed death and the case of the prisoner Isai S. Oggins. Oggins was an American Communist who in 1930s worked for the Soviet intelligence in China. In 1939, he was arrested by the NKVD and in 1940, sentenced to 8-year imprisonment for espionage.<sup>33</sup> [Fig. 31]

In July 1946, MGB Minister Viktor Abakumov sent Molotov a letter reminding him of the Oggins case and saying that in eight months Oggins would be released. Apparently, Stalin and Molotov asked Abakumov to present a plan of Oggins's assassination because on May 21, 1947, in a special letter addressed to Stalin and Molotov Abakumov suggested how to kill Oggins and then inform the United States Embassy in Moscow that Oggins had died of tuberculosis in the city of Norilsk (one of the GULAG centers), where he had been previously imprisoned. Abakumov wrote: "The death of Oggins will be recorded in his medical chart, an autopsy record, and a certificate of burial [will be provided]." Later this plan was adjusted, and it was decided to poison Oggins. According to the Russian historian Nikita Petrov, after the Politburo's approval of this decision on June 10, 1947, Molotov personally instructed Abakumov about that.<sup>34</sup> In 1960, Pavel Sudoplatov claimed that that Stalin personally decided to liquidate Oggins on Molotov's proposal. Sudoplatov wrote that Oggins was killed by an injection of poison in Moscow, and Mairanovsky testified that it happened in his secret laboratory.<sup>35</sup> The MGB subsequently created a false document stating that Oggins supposedly died of a heart attack in January 1947 in the city of Penza prison.<sup>36</sup>

A censored copy of Abakumov's letter dated May 21, 1947, with a plan to kill Oggins was made public in 1992 without any indication from what collection and archive it had originated – like

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<sup>33</sup> On the Oggins Case, see, for instance, Birstein. *The Perversion of Knowledge*. Pp. 132–39.

<sup>34</sup> See details in N. Petrov. "Master of Individual Terror: A Portrait of Eitingon, Sudoplatov's Colleague." *Novaya Gazeta. Pravda GULAGa [New Newspaper. GULAG's Truth]*. No. 21, February 26, 2014 (in Russian), <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2014/02/26/58512-master-individualnogo-terrora>.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. Sudoplatov mentioned this killing in his 1966 appeal to the 23rd CPSU Congress written in Vladimir Prison. The text of this appeal with small reductions was published as the newspaper article: Larisa Kislinskaya. "Terminator's confession." *Sovershenno sekretno*. No. 11/116. November 1, 1998 (in Russian), <https://www.sovsekretno.ru/articles/ispoved-terminatora/>.

<sup>36</sup> In 2005, the FSB produced a second falsified copy with the same date of death, January 13, 1947, but a little bit different other information. This copy was given to Oggins's son, Professor Robin Oggins (USA).

the Smoltsov Report.<sup>37</sup> Clearly, this letter should be provided in full since a part of it had been redacted before the release. The information in which archival file this letter was found (there are page numbers 284–286 on the released copy) should be provided because this archival file may contain similar information about the fate of Wallenberg.<sup>38</sup>

In 2009, the FSB archivists informed independent researchers Vadim Birstein and Susanne Berger that “from November 16, 1945, on, Oggins was kept in Inner [Lubyanka] Prison... After December 20, 1946 [Oggins] was transferred to Penza Prison no. 1. The forcible death of Oggins took place on July 5, 1947, after which he [i.e., the body] was buried at the Jewish Cemetery in the city of Penza. The death of the American was registered at the fictional date of January 13, 1947.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, it remains unclear precisely when and where, in fact, Oggins was killed, which makes the cases of Wallenberg and Oggins really similar.

Despite repeated requests, FSB archivists have never provided documents on Oggins's transfer to Penza, his arrival in Penza Prison and his burial in the Jewish cemetery. Surprisingly, local Penza independent researchers did not find registration of Oggins's burial in the records of that cemetery.<sup>40</sup>

Evidently, an examination of Oggins's Archival-Investigation File kept in the FSB Central Archive is needed. The same archive should provide all documentation relevant to the incarceration of Oggins in Moscow prisons in 1945-46, as well as to his death.

In principle, three more documents relevant to the Oggins case should be released additionally and become available:

1. Report of the Central Control Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party that evaluates the activities of Pavel Sudoplatov and his deputy, Naum Eitingon, and includes details of Oggins' killing, dated August 1968; it is kept in the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI, Moscow). On recommendation of Ms. Nataliya Tomilina, RGANI's Director, in July 2019 we submitted a request to the Russian Archival Agency (*Rosarkhiv*) to declassify this 1968 report by the Interdepartmental Commission for Protection of State Secrets. Instead of declassification, on November 14, 2019, this Commission prolonged classification of the 1968 report until 2044 with the resolution

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<sup>37</sup> In 1992, Col. Gen. Dmitry Volkogonov, then Adviser on Defense Issues to the President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin, handed a heavily censored copy of Abakumov's letter with other documents over to the American side of the Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs.

<sup>38</sup> The released copy has a number 4, – in other words, there were four copies of the letter in various files.

<sup>39</sup> FSB letter no. 581 from the FSB Central Archive to S. Berger and V. Birstein, dated November 2, 2009 (in Russian); received via the Swedish Embassy in Moscow.

<sup>40</sup> On Dr. Birstein's request, members of the Penza branch of the Memorial Society checked records of that cemetery. There was no record for Isai Oggins.

that it “does not declassify this document since it contains information constituting a state secret.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, this report will be practically inaccessible.

2. A memo by Vladimir Bazykin, deputy head of MID’s USA Department, on the Oggins case, dated January 31, 1947 (AVPRF); and
3. Another memo, prepared by Bazykin, entitled “Questions that could be raised by the U.S. Ambassador [Walter Bedell] Smith in a conversation with Comrade Molotov,” dated July 10, 1947 (the same archive). It would be interesting to compare what official answer was planned about Oggins’s death with the text of the Vyshinsky Note.

### **The return of Raoul Wallenberg’s personal possessions in 1989**

One of the main unsolved issues in the Wallenberg investigation is the allegedly accidental discovery of Wallenberg’s valuables, money, and other possessions by KGB officials in 1989, which supposedly occurred without the help of any archival finding aids. [Fig. 32] The timing of the discovery -- September 1989, just about a month before Wallenberg's family visited Moscow on the invitation of Mikhail Gorbachev, then Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and later, Soviet President -- also appears questionable. Soviet officials claimed that they had been discovered during refurbishment of old KGB offices.

Raoul Wallenberg's personal possessions included his appointment diary, valuables, and large sums of foreign currency in old bills. Many questions persist about this alleged discovery that have never been answered.

It is known that the system of recording possessions was quite elaborate, with giving the prisoner separate receipts for the money and for the other valuables. However, on Wallenberg’s arrival in the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison, only his backpack was registered, and no valuables and money were mentioned (Document A 7 in the UD database). In the meantime, from the records for other prisoners it is known that on arrival, separate receipts were issued for the money, valuables (in Wallenberg’s case it would have been for his cigarette case), and documents (his ID and passport). Even more, each of these categories was usually supplied with a separate receipt for the list that described items within each of the categories. In other words, it appears Wallenberg arrived without valuables and money, they were handed over to the 2nd SMERSH Department separately, possibly, by the SMERSH convoy.<sup>42</sup> How could all those items be found without corresponding archival documentation?

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<sup>41</sup> Letter No. 1/719-e from the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI) dated December 6, 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Head of the convoy, Captain Nikolai Zenkov, about whom Matvei Zakharov, head of the HQ of the 2nd Ukrainian Front, reported to Deputy Defense Commissar Nikolai Bulganin on January 25, 1945 (Document C 14 in the UD

It would be extremely unusual if Wallenberg's appointment diary had been kept along with the valuables. Usually, such documentation was part of the materials in the Archival-Investigation File. However, Wallenberg died, apparently, before he was formally arrested and, therefore, an Investigation File was created. Clearly, the origin of these two items remains a mystery.

The Soviet and Russian authorities claimed that Wallenberg died in July 1947. During investigation, valuables and currency were stored in the NKGB/MGB Financial Department. In most cases of political arrestees, the sentencing of a prisoner included confiscation of valuables and currency.<sup>43</sup> But if a prisoner died, under prison rules theoretically the currency and valuables should have been permanently confiscated by the Soviet State within six months of his/her death or returned to next-of-kin.<sup>44</sup> These rules do not apply to prisoners under investigation in NKVD/NKGB/MGB investigation prisons: from July 1939 on, it was forbidden to inform relatives about the death of their loved ones who had been under investigation and to release corpses of these prisoners to the relatives.<sup>45</sup>

However, since Wallenberg was listed a prisoner-of-war (POW), as it is written on his Prisoner Card in Lubyanka Prison, which was released in 1989 along with his possessions, apparently the rules for POWs had been applied to him. According to these rules, after his death such

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database), served in the SMERSH Department of the 375th Rifle Division of the 53rd Army within the 2nd Ukrainian Front, <https://pamyat-naroda.su/awards/21666644> (in Russian).

<sup>43</sup> Even if the sentencing did not include confiscation, later the former prisoner received after his release not foreign currency bills, but an equivalent sum in Russian rubles.

<sup>44</sup> The question of confiscation was discussed in: S. E. Mesinai. "Ramification of Wallenberg's Returned Possessions" (*The Swedish Report*, 2000. Appendix 44. Pp. 324–26). Ms. Mesinai based her discussion on the archival study by Gennadii Kuzovkin, a researcher at the International Memorial Society in Moscow. Mr. Kuzovkin examined the NKVD/MVD documentation in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) on this issue. However, the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison and Lefortovo Prison were under the jurisdiction of the NKGB, later the MGB, for which these rules are almost unknown (apparently, the instructions are kept in the FSB Central Archive). More importantly, Wallenberg's record of possessions in Lubyanka Prison after his arrival on February 6, 1945, demonstrates that only his backpack was registered, even without a list of items inside it (Document A 7 in the UD database). Since the receipts for other items were not mentioned in Wallenberg's first record after his arrival in Lubyanka, it appears clear that the items that the KGB representatives handed over to Wallenberg's relatives in 1989 were not with him when he was brought to Lubyanka. Therefore, any kind of confiscation rules, especially taking into consideration that Wallenberg had never been formally arrested, criminally investigated, and sentenced (usually confiscation was ruled by the sentence), could not be applied to him. It is still a mystery how all these items in Wallenberg's possession survived in the KGB archive.

<sup>45</sup> NKVD Order no. 00859, entitled "Regulations for NKVD Investigation Prisons" and dated August 28, 1939. Cited in: A. I. Zubkov. *Criminal-Executive Law in Russia*. Moscow: Norma, 2006 (in Russian), <http://pravo.news/ugolovnoe-pravo-ross-kniga/osobennosti-pravovogo-regulirovaniya-8900.html>. Information about the death of foreigners arrested at the end of WWII by SMERSH operatives started to be released from approximately 1955 on.



valuables as his gold cigarette case should have been sent to the Precious Metals Directorate of the USSR Finances Ministry, and the foreign banknotes, — to the State Bank (*Gosbank*).<sup>46</sup>

But anyway, since the valuables and money were not registered in Wallenberg's possession when he arrived in Lubyanka, the rules about prisoner's valuables, apparently, could not be applied to him. If Raoul Wallenberg indeed died in 1947, it is a mystery how and why his money and valuables were kept in the MGB/KGB storage and handed over to his family in 1989.

One more question is: How did Soviet authorities know what amount they should return? Did they indeed find a package or envelope containing bills of foreign currency or did they have a copy of the receipt that was given to Raoul Wallenberg on his arrival in Lubyanka Prison in 1945? If so, in which file did the KGB officials locate this receipt?

The 40,000 documents released by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2019 contain another potentially intriguing piece of information. According to unconfirmed reports, a Russian documentary filmmaker (and possibly other sources) reported already in August 1989 that Soviet authorities intended to return Raoul Wallenberg's personal possessions to his family. If true, this would be quite remarkable, considering KGB officials had claimed that they discovered Wallenberg's possessions only in September 1989, by pure coincidence, in a storage room of the KGB archives. This claim must be examined further, because the exact circumstances of how Wallenberg's possessions were in fact located in 1989 remains one of the biggest question marks in the Wallenberg mystery.

### **The personal possessions of Vilmos Langfelder and Sandor Katona**

There is also an open question about the personal possessions of Vilmos Langfelder and Sandor Katona in the FSB Central Archive. [Fig. 33] In the 1990s, the archive released a copy of the receipt no. 265 and a detailed list of Langfelder's possessions (both in Russian) given to him in Lefortovo Prison on March 20, 1945, after he was brought in that prison from Lubyanka Prison (Document A12 in the UD database). The receipt and the list had handwritten page numbers 154 and 155.<sup>47</sup>

In 2009, the FSB Central Archive released a similar detailed list of possessions given to Sandor Katona, Langfelder's long-time cellmate, when he was brought to Lefortovo Prison from Bucharest on October 3, 1944. This list has a similar handwritten page number 151. Both lists

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<sup>46</sup> "Instruction on the Way of Financing," dated April 13, 1946. Document 3.27 in: *POWs in the USSR 1939-1956. Documents and Materials*. Edited by M. M. Zagorul'ko. Moscow: Logos, 2000. Pp. 199–204 (in Russian).

<sup>47</sup> On the back of the list there is a handwritten note: "The possessions have been given out in full. Maznev [signature]." Sn. Sergeant Pyotr Maznev was Sn. Wardan of Lubyanka Prison (FSB letter from January 28, 2009). Apparently, Maznev headed the convoy that transferred Langfelder and Katona in the early hours of July 23, 1947, from Lefortovo to Lubyanka Prison.

had traces of folding and serious wear and, most likely, they remained with these prisoners while they were kept in Lefortovo Prison.

Judging from page numbers on both documents, it seems they were taken from the same archival file. According to FSB archivists, this was the so-called Nomenclature File with Receipts [*Номенклатурное дело с квитанциями*] from the Internal and Lefortovo prisons.<sup>48</sup>

It is possible that similar receipts for and lists of possessions of Wallenberg and Rödel were kept in the same file. This particular archival file needs to be carefully examined by independent researchers.

### **SMERSH/MGB Documents**

In 1994, FSB representatives handed over to the Swedish side a document entitled “Collections [*fondy* in Russian] of Archival Materials That Have Been Looked Through in Connection with the Fate of R. Wallenberg.” [Fig. 34] This list consists of 24 points with very general names of the SMERSH, MGB, NKVD, NKGB and KGB units and three NKGB/MGB prisons. Here are some examples:

1. Counterintelligence SMERSH Directorate of the 2nd Ukrainian Front.
10. Main SMERSH Directorate (central apparatus [in Moscow]), 1945-1946.
13. MGB/KGB Secretariat, 1945-1962 [i.e., Abakumov’s Secretariat from 1946 to 1951].
15. 3rd MGB Main Directorate [military counterintelligence], 1946-1949.
16. 4th Department [headed by Sergei Kartashov] of the 3rd MGB Main Directorate, 1946-1949.

Clearly, each of these collections included thousands of files, and inspecting them would be long-time work of many archivists. However, no archival attribution of materials was provided and there was no explanation how the study was organized, who carried it out and no results were described. The Swedish part of the Working Group did not insist on an independent review of these collections, it simply accepted this list as a fact.<sup>49</sup> It is highly questionable that such enormous collections like documents in Abakumov’s secretariat or Kartashov’s department (for the years 1946-49) that investigated the Wallenberg case, as well as the MGB Department “A” (registration and archives) do not contain any documentation regarding Wallenberg, Langfelder, and their cellmates. All these collections must be studied by independent researchers.

### **Special Folders of Stalin and Politburo**

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<sup>48</sup> FSB letter no. 10/GK-65, July 4, 2008.

<sup>49</sup> P. 19 and Attachment 4 (pp. 215–216). The Swedish report *Raoul Wallenberg*.

There is one more source in the FSB archives that, apparently, has never been examined, – the so-called Special Folders of Stalin and Politburo members that contain the most important reports from the NKGB/MGB.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, inquiries about these particular folders should be raised with the FSB Central Archive.

## Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR)

The Swedish-Russian Working Group did not include any members of SVR, the Russian External Intelligence Service (the successor of the MGB/KGB Foreign Intelligence), although Swedish and Russian officials held separate discussions with SVR representatives. SVR officials argued that their archive contained no relevant information about Raoul Wallenberg and that "all questions had been addressed" in parallel, behind the scenes discussions between Colonel Vladimir Rozhkov, SVR Deputy Head, and Ambassador Hans Magnusson.<sup>51</sup> The Swedish diplomats did not further press for SVR's participation, even though the agency's claim that it had no information at all about Raoul Wallenberg was clearly questionable. For instance, the member of the Working Group Col. Vinogradov presented in 1994 a copy of the Soviet external intelligence report on the Wallenberg brothers dated April 1945 from the SVR Archive and published in a history book (Document A55 in the UD database).<sup>52</sup>

In 2012, in connection with the Raoul Wallenberg centenary (the 100th anniversary of Raoul Wallenberg's birth), the AVPRF (MID's Archive) released almost 7,000 diplomatic cipher cables sent between Stockholm and Moscow in the years 1944–47. However, 3,000 additional communications for that same period have remained classified in a number of Russian archival collections, including the Central Archive of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR). Another obvious example are the Soviet foreign and military intelligence reports, as well as those from Soviet military counterintelligence from Hungary for the years 1944–1945, which - among many other things - detail the activities of the Swedish Legation, Budapest. The material remains strictly classified and Swedish officials did not insist on a review.

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<sup>50</sup> Special Folders with especially secret NKVD/MVD reports are kept in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), and some materials from them were declassified and available in the 1990s. However, no documentation about Wallenberg was declassified from these NKVD/MVD Special Files of Stalin, Molotov, and Beria. This is not surprising because information about the Wallenberg case could be only in the reports by SMERSH and MGB, not by the NKVD/MVD.

<sup>51</sup> Susanne Berger. *An inquiry steered from the top? Twenty-five years later, still many loose ends in three major cold war cases*. March 1, 2015 ([PDF](#)) [An Inquiry Steered From The Top? Twenty-five years later, still many loose ends in three major Cold War cases | Susanne Berger - Academia.edu](#)

<sup>52</sup> The Wallenbergs are mentioned also in other SVR's publications of documents, for instance, in intelligence reports in March and April 1942. See *Baltic Countries and Geopolitics*, pp. 716–17 and 733 (in Russian), <http://www.svr.gov.ru/upload/26122016.pdf>.

The copy of a one-page letter (released in the 1990s) by Aleksander Sakharovsky, at the time the 1st Deputy Head of the 1st KGB Main Directorate (PGU, external intelligence), to Mikhail Gribanov, head of MID's Scandinavian Department, dated December 19, 1955, shows that the SVR Archive has some documentation about the Wallenberg case (Document D39 in the UD database).<sup>53</sup> Sakharovsky's letter mentions Gribanov's letter to which he was answering (and which included Gribanov's suggestion how to answer the Swedes about Wallenberg, unknown to us) and a 6-pages attachment, neither of which were released. Therefore, the SVR Archive needs to present at least Gribanov-Sakharovsky's correspondence in full.

The SVR repeatedly rejected requests to provide access to the files of Count Mikhail Kutuzov-Tolstoy — Agent Operational File (if he was, in fact, Soviet agent) and/or Personal File — for information regarding Raoul Wallenberg and his work at the Swedish Legation, Budapest, in 1944. (In 1944, Count Kutuzov-Tolstoy was an employee of the Legation). [Fig. 35] According to Col. Vinogradov, Kutuzov-Tolstoy's file contained a "character sketch" of members of the Swedish Legation, Budapest, including Raoul Wallenberg, authored by Kutuzov-Tolstoy that later was allegedly destroyed. Requests to review the administrative order for the paper's destruction (referred to by Col. Vinogradov) have remained unanswered.

Anatoly Prokopenko, the former head of the Special (now Military) Archive in Moscow, claimed that he had seen Kutuzov-Tolstoy's file in 1991, in a KGB archive outside of Moscow. Since then, apparently this file has been kept in the SVR archive in Moscow.

During the late 1990s, Ambassador Hans Magnusson requested that a member of the Russian Foreign Ministry be given access to Kutuzov-Tolstoy's file. This request was granted, with the official reporting back that the documentation contained "no information that was not already known." No formal written report of this review was apparently ever made.

It remains unknown what file the Russian official studied. If that was an Agent File, does this mean that Kutuzov-Tolstoy was, in fact, a Soviet agent? Did he report on Raoul Wallenberg and the other Swedish diplomats as an agent?

## **Records of the Soviet Foreign Trade Ministry**

### **The Wallenberg business family**

#### **Records about the Wallenberg business family from the Soviet Commissariat/Ministry for Foreign Trade and Wallenberg-controlled companies**

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<sup>53</sup> In fact, at the time, from June 1955 to May 1956, A. M. Sakharovsky (1909–1953) was Acting Head of the PGU, and from May 1956 to July 1971, he headed the PGU. See his biography, for instance, at [http://shieldandsword.mozohin.ru/personnel/saharovskiy\\_a\\_m.htm](http://shieldandsword.mozohin.ru/personnel/saharovskiy_a_m.htm) (in Russian).

Russian officials have repeatedly stated that special collections about the wartime business contacts of the Swedish bankers Marcus and Jacob Wallenberg – Raoul Wallenberg's cousins-once-removed – with both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union exist in several Russian archives. However, Swedish officials did not seriously press Russian authorities for the release of information about extensive contacts of the Soviet Commissariat/Ministry for Foreign Trade with Wallenberg-controlled companies, and, possibly, with Raoul Wallenberg himself. It is also necessary to mention that Mikhail Nikitin, head of the Soviet Trade Mission in Stockholm, maintained close contact with the Wallenberg brothers and must have reported regularly on these discussions to the Foreign Trade Commissariat/Ministry.

The Wallenbergs were certainly no strangers to Stalin and the Soviet leadership. The Wallenberg-controlled companies had a presence in Russia since 1916, especially the ball bearing trust SKF (*Svenska Kullagerfabriken*) that built a large ball bearing factory operating in Moscow under Swedish management until the end of the 1930s. The SKF provided crucial deliveries to Moscow during WWII. As the newly found documentation demonstrates, Anastas Mikoyan, Commissar/Minister for Foreign Trade and a Politburo member, personally reported to Stalin and Molotov about shipments from Sweden.<sup>54</sup> Among other benefits the Soviet Union received from the association with the Wallenberg brothers personally was Marcus Wallenberg's instrumental help in organizing the Finnish-Soviet peace negotiations in 1944, just a few months before Raoul Wallenberg's detention.

In addition to the records for the SKF trust and other Wallenberg-owned companies, there should exist, of course, vast documentation of the long history of various Swedish-Soviet business contracts and credit and trade negotiations, especially including those of May-October 1946. As newly obtained documentation shows, beginning from the Politburo decision on April 5, 1946, the negotiations were conducted under Stalin's personal control.<sup>55</sup> Thus, in September 1946, Stalin approved Anastas Mikoyan's report regarding the achievement of the Credit and Trade Agreement.<sup>56</sup>

The documents might provide some helpful clues about the attitudes of the Soviet leadership towards Sweden and the Wallenberg family, as well as the nature and extent of Swedish-Soviet

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<sup>54</sup> Mikoyan's report to Stalin and Molotov entitled "On shipments from Sweden and Finland" dated January 1, 1945. AVPRF. F. 06 (Molotov's Secretariat). Op. 7. D. 178. P. 17. Ll. 1–2 (*a newly obtained document*).

<sup>55</sup> On April 5, 1946, Molotov presented a draft of the decision regarding Sweden to Stalin with the note: "To Com.[rade] Stalin. I ask you to consider the draft of the C[entral] C[ommittee] decision on the question of "Our relations with Sweden" [underlined in the Russian original]. 5/IV. V. Molotov." RGASPI. F. 17 (Politburo materials). Op. 166. D. 765. L. 10 (*a newly obtained document*).

<sup>56</sup> An entry in the Register of Documents Received and Sent Out with Stalin's Resolutions dated September 22, 1946 (Anastas Mikoyan presented a draft on September 20, 1946). Stalin's Secretary Aleksandr Poskrebyshev wrote: "C[omrade] Stalin does not object." RGASPI. F. 588 (Stalin's documents). Op. 11 (Stalin's Secretariat). D. 424. L. 34 (*a newly obtained document*).

business relations immediately before and after Raoul Wallenberg's detention. It may also give some additional insights regarding the possible reasons for Raoul Wallenberg's detention and the Wallenberg brothers' notably passive attitude toward his disappearance. The Russian side has also never produced any documentation of Raoul Wallenberg's official contacts with the Soviet Trade Delegation in Stockholm for 1944.

## **Records of the Military Prosecutor General's Office**

### **Raoul Wallenberg's rehabilitation in 2000 [Fig. 36]**

An example where more information about Raoul Wallenberg's fate could be found are the files of the Russian Prosecutor General's Office and subordinated to it Chief Military Prosecutor's Office. In 2018, Marie von Dardel-Dupuy, Raoul Wallenberg's niece, requested all records regarding the decision by this office to rehabilitate Raoul Wallenberg in 2000. In response to the request, the Prosecutor's Office replied that they do have records in their possession which they refuse to share with Ms. Dupuy.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, the Prosecutor's Office appears to refer to some information in its official statements about the case that Raoul Wallenberg was apparently shot to death.<sup>58</sup> This version was expressed also in the 1990s in the statements of some Russian officials, but it contradicts the previous official Soviet version of Wallenberg's death of natural causes. These contradictions must be addressed and solved.

## **Records of the Soviet Commissariat/Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID)**

**It is clear that copies of not all documentation of the Soviet Commissariat/Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NKID/MID) regarding Wallenberg and other Swedish diplomats of the Legation in Budapest had been released in 1991–2000 to the Swedish side of the Working Group.**

Copies of documents released in February 2021 (to Birstein/Berger) contain records which were not previously provided by the Russian Federation Foreign Policy Archive to the Swedish side. Among others, these included copies of Swedish diplomatic notes about Wallenberg handed over by Staffan Söderblom in 1945-46, with the handwritten names of internal distribution of

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<sup>57</sup> In 2001, the Russian media published a huge excerpt from the Conclusion by the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office that described the Wallenberg case in detail (*Itogi*. No. 2/240, January 16, 2001, <http://www.itogi.ru/archive/2001/2/119739.html>). Wallenberg's rehabilitation was based on this document. In 2018–2020, the same Chief Military Prosecutor's Office refused to release this document in full, as well as the other rehabilitation documentation. Russian courts, including the Supreme Court, supported the Chief Prosecutor Office's refusal.

<sup>58</sup> For instance, in 1988–89, the long-time intelligence officer (in the 1970s–80s, he was sent twice as an external intelligence *resident* to Paris, and between these assignments, he headed the West European Department of External Intelligence) told the Swedish Ambassador to Washington Wilhelm Wachtmeister that in the internal intelligence files he saw a document stating that Wallenberg was shot to death on Abakumov's order.

these notes within the NKID/MID. They reveal for the first time which Soviet officials were informed about these discussions.

Also, the newly released material included Deputy Foreign Affairs Commissar Dekanozov's communication with NKID's Legal Department and 1st Deputy Foreign Affairs Commissar Vyshinsky regarding detained foreign diplomats (which underscores the important role of this department), as well as the communication of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army (GlavPURKKA) with Foreign Affairs Commissar Molotov on the same matter (Molotov forwarded the GlavPURKKA letter to Dekanozov).<sup>59</sup> **It is of great importance to check whether or not the records of the GlavPURKKA also contain similar information about the detention of Raoul Wallenberg and Vilmos Langfelder.**

The release further included a copy of Dekanozov's letter to Nikolai Bulganin, deputy Defense Commissar, regarding the transfer of Raoul Wallenberg's diplomatic colleagues from Debrecen to Moscow in March-April 1945. **The question what exactly Wallenberg's colleagues told Soviet officials about Raoul Wallenberg remains of central importance to the Wallenberg investigation.** Taking all of this into consideration, it is quite possible that the complete NKID documentation contains similar references to Raoul Wallenberg's detention.

## The creation of the Vyshinsky Note

### The importance of Solomon Lozovsky's report from December 13, 1946

The newly released copy of the minutes of the meeting of Solomon Lozovsky, head of the *Sovinformburo*, with Ulf Barck-Holst, Swedish Chargé d'Affaires, on December 13, 1946, demonstrate that the role of this document in the Wallenberg case was not understood by the authors of the Swedish Report of the Working Group, nor by other researchers (at least, this copy was not put into the UD online database about Raoul Wallenberg).<sup>60</sup> [Fig. 37, Fig. 38] Despite the fact that during the time of the Working Group copies of the original report and the second copy were released from the still most secret Presidential Archive (APRF) (Document E1 in the UD Raoul Wallenberg database) and the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) (Document B1 in the same database) respectively, which meant that both came from the Politburo documentation, those authors apparently did not recognize that

<sup>59</sup> *Newly obtained documents in 2021*: AVPRF. F. 012. Op. 6. Por. 74. P. 77. Ll. 1–2, 3, 5, 7–9.

<sup>60</sup> Solomon Lozovsky (1878–1952) was Deputy Commissar/Minister for Foreign Affairs from May 14, 1939, to July 24, 1946. He was ousted after he, as Acting Minister (Molotov and Vyshinsky were in Paris), agreed to the request of the American Ambassador General Walter Bedell Smith to reduce the number of Soviet militiamen (police) guarding the American Embassy and allow the American Marines to check passports of visitors. Stalin was outraged that Lozovsky did not consult with him before he gave a positive answer to the American Ambassador, and Lozovsky was fired. From June 6, 1941 to July 24, 1946, Lozovsky was also deputy head of the *Sovinformburo*, the Soviet news agency, and from July 24 to July 25, 1947, he headed this agency. See <http://www.knowbysight.info/LLL/05307.asp> (in Russian).

the copy from the APRF was the copy that Stalin saw and in which he made his underlining in the text. The copy from the RGASPI, most likely, has Molotov's underlining.<sup>61</sup>

**The newly released copy proves that Stalin, in fact, received a copy of Lozovsky's minutes, it has the list of recipients of copies of the notes: "Sent to: Com.[rades] Stalin, Molotov, Vyshinsky, Dekanozov." The released copy was typed in Molotov's MID Secretariat for Vyshinsky, and Molotov's assistant Vladimir Yerofeev certified it.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, most likely on Stalin's instruction on January 2, 1947, Molotov wrote on Dekanozov's copy of Lozovsky's minutes (also certified by Yerofeev) an official order to Dekanozov: "I ask you to understand [the issue] and give me your suggestions."**

In his turn, Dekanozov wrote two resolutions, addressed to two persons, and not only to Abakumov, as the Swedish Report says (p. 91).<sup>63</sup> The first resolution was addressed to Kirill Novikov, a MID Collegium member (sometimes incorrectly mentioned in Swedish papers as Molotov's deputy): "I ask you to give me your suggestions." And the second, to Abakumov: "I ask you to report to me what is known about this issue for the report to Com.[rade] Molotov V.M. V. Dekanozov. 1.I.47." This copy has a handwritten note: "A copy with resolutions was sent to Com. Abakumov. 12.I.47." Dekanozov marked both resolutions "personal", which meant that copies of the document with resolutions were delivered to the addresses via couriers.<sup>64</sup> **Actually, from these two resolutions a preparation of the document that later became known as the Vyshinsky Note about Raoul Wallenberg started in the MID under Novikov's control. But Stalin's involvement was clearly a trigger of the whole situation.**<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> The Swedish report even does not mention receiving copies of Lozovsky's minutes from these two most important collections of Politburo materials saying only that Lozovsky's "notes of the conversation were sent to Abakumov with a request from Molotov and Dekanozov for a report and presentation" (p. 91). Apparently, the Swedish report refers to the third document, Molotov's order to Dekanozov to sort out the Wallenberg issue, written on a copy of Lozovsky's minutes (Document F23 in the same database).

<sup>62</sup> From 1942 to 1944, V. I. Yerofeev (1920–2011) worked in the Soviet Mission in Stockholm, as an assistant to Ambassador Alexandra Kollontay. From 1944 to 1949, he was in the NKID/MID secretariat of Molotov, as well as Stalin's translator into and from French from 1945 on. From 1949 to 1955, Yerofeev was assistant to Molotov, at the time 1st Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers; in 1955, he was assistant to Molotov, Foreign Affairs Minister. From 1955 to 1979, Yerofeev held various diplomatic posts in Europe and other countries. Later he worked in the MID. See his memoir Vladimir Yerofeev. *Diplomat*. Moscow: Zebra Ye, 2005 (in Russian).

<sup>63</sup> However, a few years later, with the help of the Norwegian historian Sven G. Holtmark, members of the Elisson Commission managed to read both resolutions (p. 458 of the Eliasson Commission Report).

<sup>64</sup> According to handwritten note on the document, this copy with two resolutions were returned to and filed in the 5th EO in 1948.

<sup>65</sup> The consequence of the next events was the following. On January 16, 1947, Novikov ordered Mikhail Vetrov, who from August 1946 on headed the 5th MID EO, "to officially request (and not by phone) our organs [meaning MGB] regarding Wallenberg" (a handwritten note on Document F26). On February 2, Vyshinsky wrote a note to Novikov: "What is the matter – it is necessary to find a satisfactory answer [regarding Wallenberg]" (a handwritten note on Document F24).

The next document released by the AVPRF in 1991 was a draft of Novikov's report to Molotov dated February 8, 1947, and it contained a short information about the Wallenberg case prepared by Vetrov. Novikov immediately considerably edited Vetrov's draft and added the information about the report by Pyotr Fedotov,



**The example of the Lozovsky minutes shows the importance of lists of recipients of documents that most of official documents had below the text (in MID's deciphered cables the list is above the text). For unknown reasons, the authors of the Swedish report totally ignored this crucial information which allows one to understand who read and knew about a particular document.**

#### **The finalization of the Vyshinsky Note – important gaps in the official record**

**While discussing the Vyshinsky Note dated August 18, 1947, the Swedish Report (pp. 99-100) did not mention the names of those who received copies of this report: Stalin, Molotov, the Politburo members closest to Stalin (Lavrentii Beria, Andrei Zhdanov, Georgii Malenkov, Anastas Mikoyan, Nikolai Voznesensky), Viktor Abakumov, two deputies of Molotov Fyodor Gusev and Yakov Malik, and a MID Collegium member Kirill Novikov. [Fig. 39]** Even more, the authors of the Report did not pay attention to the fact that the Presidential Archive provided the Swedish side with the copy that Stalin received (Stalin's name was underlined; Document E2 in the UD database). **Clearly, the original was kept in the Politburo materials and the Vyshinsky Note was not simply a MID statement, but the statement approved by the Politburo members.**<sup>66</sup> This should not be surprising because, according to the Politburo decision of February 8, 1947, all important issues of MID were under the direct control of Stalin and six Politburo members closest to him.<sup>67</sup>

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deputy MGB Minister, that the answer about Wallenberg had already been prepared (Document D16). Apparently, there was a preceding oral communication of Novikov with Fedotov, a record of which is lacking in the released documentation. The same day, on February 8, Novikov ordered Vetrov to secretly retype the edited draft. Apparently, Vetrov followed Novikov's instruction, but in more edited form this draft became Vetrov's report to Vyshinsky about the Wallenberg case dated April 2, 1947. It seems that Molotov was so occupied with his involvement in Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers (March 10–April 24, 1947), that his 1st Deputy Vyshinsky was in charge of the every-day work of the ministry.

Vetrov's report was typed in the only copy, without an outgoing number, and was marked "Top Secret" and "Personally"; in other words, the report was so secret that it was needed to be handed directly over to Vyshinsky. The report included information about a conversation with Fedotov. Vetrov's note was used for preparing Vyshinsky's complaint about Abakumov to Molotov dated May 15, 1947, that Molotov officially forwarded to Abakumov three days later. Partly the text of this note was used for a draft of the note to the Swedes prepared on order of Yakov Malik, the new Deputy MID Minister, which after Molotov's editorial changes, became the Vyshinsky Note.

<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, it is impossible to check the originals in this archive, it is still secret. According to the information from the Memorial Society (Moscow), the Politburo materials for the 1940s have been transferred to the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI, Moscow), that keeps such materials for 1952-1990 (Fond 3, <http://xn--80afqtm.xn--p1ai/fond-3-politbyuro-ck-kpss>). The NKID/MID Politburo documentation should be in Fond 3, Opis' 64, but there is no guarantee that all transferred materials will be declassified and available for researchers.

<sup>67</sup> Politburo decision P56/137 on the Council of Ministers work dated February 8, 1947. P. 42 (Paragraph III) in the Document 16 in *Politburo of the Central Committee of the VKP (b) and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, 1945–1953*, compiled by O. V. Khlevnyuk et al. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002. Pp. 39–44 (in Russian). By the way, judging from

**Moreover, it is clear that the AVPRF did not release some intermediate documentation concerning the preparation of the Vyshinsky Note.** MID's cover letter of the draft of the note says in Russian: "9. Draft of the note of Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Ya. A. Malik to the Swedish Envoy in the USSR R. Sohlman." Therefore, there was Malik's version of the draft note, which was not provided. Also, in his cover letter to the draft note addressed to Molotov, Andrei Vyshinsky said: "I present to you a draft answer, which reproduces an extract [*our emphasis*] [from the text] known to you." The Swedish Report translated this crucial part of the phrase incorrectly, saying "the draft of which you are aware" (p. 98) instead of "which introduces an extract known to you."<sup>68</sup> **In fact, about a half of the Vyshinsky Note does not correspond to the previous known preparative versions of the text in MID's internal correspondence. In other words, there was a crucial document, currently unknown to us, but known to Molotov and Vyshinsky, part of which was reproduced in the draft and on which the whole Vyshinsky Note was based.** One can only guess if that was Abakumov's letter to Molotov regarding Wallenberg's fate dated July 17, 1947, that has not been found.

Due to poor filing of documents received from Russian archives (there is no original archival registration numbers given for the documents in the UD database, which would include page numbers of the original files) by the Swedish side, it is sometimes difficult to understand if the released copies belonged to the same group of documents or they were originally separate documents. This especially concerns copies of the Lozovsky minutes and the Vyshinsky Note received from the Presidential Archive. The Lozovsky minutes with two attachments have page numbers 1–4, while the copy of the Vyshinsky Note in which Stalin's name was underlined has page numbers 3–6. If originally, they were filed in the Politburo materials together, this means that the Lozovsky minutes with Stalin's underlining opened this block of two documents, and the Vyshinsky Note closed the situation. If they were filed separately, a logical conclusion would be that pages 1–4 that preceded the Vyshinsky Note are missing in the released materials. It is not possible to come to a final conclusion without access to the archival originals or receiving a clear explanation from the archive.

### **The authors of the Vyshinsky Note**

The Eliasson Commission claims that Vyshinsky worked on his note, there is even a chapter about that (pp. 461–462). However, there is no data to suggest that if Stalin read the Lozovsky

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the list of addresses of copies of the Note, Molotov's second new deputy Fyodor Gusev was also involved in the solution of the Wallenberg case. Fyodor Gusev (1905–1987) was Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister from August 22, 1946, to October 1952. See his biography in Russian at <http://www.knowbysight.info/GGG/02315.asp>.

<sup>68</sup> Here is the original Russian phrase in full: «Представляю проект ответа, в котором воспроизводится известная Вам выписка с добавлением абзаца относительно беседы т. Новикова с Хегглефом 30 января сего года» (Document D24). In the Russian version of the report, the part "an extract known to you" is cited correctly («известная Вам выписка», p. 99), but the previous words "which reproduces" are missing again.

minutes at the end of December 1946, and this reading triggered the whole issue, Vyshinsky personally worked on the note. First, Vyshinsky had never worked himself on a document, he, as Molotov and other deputy ministers, worked with draft documents presented to him by the staff, in this case, by Vetrov and his department.

Second, all documentation released by the AVPRF so far, demonstrates that in MID, during first months of 1947, Kirill Novikov was responsible for the development of the answer to the Swedes regarding Wallenberg, and then, Yakov Malik was in charge.<sup>69</sup> Malik, apparently, not only participated in the finalization of the text of the future Vyshinsky Note, but he was much more involved. On July 23, 1947, Mikhail Vetrov reported to him in a memo about Vyshinsky's two letters to Abakumov, as well as Aleksandra Kollontay reported to Malik personally about a telegram from Sweden that she had received and that inquired about Raoul Wallenberg (Documents D20 and D23). This particular memo by Vetrov carries a handwritten note saying: "The letter from Com.[rade] Abakumov has been received in the Secretariat of Com.[rade] Molotov. [illeg. signature, not Vetrov's]." After this Vetrov wrote on the top of the memo "Personally", in other words, he or his staffer handed the letter over to Malik. Malik wrote a resolution: "To: Com. Vetrov. Report to Com. Vyshinsky. 23/VII. Ya.M." (Document D23). It seems this is how Vyshinsky found out about Abakumov's letter to Molotov, when Vetrov reported to him on Malik's instruction.

Third, it is possible that Vyshinsky, and not Molotov, became the signatory of the Note at the last moment because at the time, Vyshinsky was Acting Minister. From July 25 to November 17, 1947, Molotov was on vacation at his *dacha* (country house) in the city of Sochi on the Black Sea. Therefore, the draft of the future note with the date August 9, 1947, sent to him by Vyshinsky and that Molotov edited and approved with the instruction to include his editorial changes (Document D25) reached him and was sent back via couriers, which was common communication between Politburo members, ministers and, apparently, deputy ministers with their Moscow offices when they were on vacation.<sup>70</sup>

There is also a possibility that on the same day, August 9, 1947, a draft of the Note was discussed with Stalin. On that evening, there was a meeting at Stalin's office in the Kremlin.<sup>71</sup> The main members of the Politburo, except Molotov (who was on vacation), were in attendance: Stalin, Beria, Georgii Malenkov, Nikolai Voznesensky, Andrei Zhdanov, Nikolai

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<sup>69</sup> On April 13, 1947, diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Dominion of India were formally established with the opening of the embassies. On October 23, 1947, Novikov was appointed the first Soviet Ambassador to India (see his biography in Russian at <http://www.knowbysight.info/NNN/03628.asp> ). Most likely, he was overwhelmed with diplomatic negotiations that preceded the opening of the Soviet Embassy and could not continue his control over the Wallenberg case.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, among copies of the documents released by the AVPRF in February 2021, there is a letter of Dekanozov to Vyshinsky about members of the Swedish Legation dated February 15, 1945, reminding Vyshinsky about the memo that he had sent to Vyshinsky when the latter was on vacation in the Crimea. AVPRF. Fond 012 (Dekanozov's Fond/Collection). Op. 6. Por. 74. P. 77. L. 5.

<sup>71</sup> *In Stalin's Office: Registers of Persons Who Had Appointments with I. V. Stalin (1924–1953)*, edited by A. A. Chernobaev. Moscow: Novyi khronograf, 2008. P. 492 (in Russian).

Bulganin, as well as Moscow First Communist Party Secretary Georgii Popov. Vyshinsky was at this meeting from 22:10 to 22:50 pm, and Abakumov, from 23:00 to 23:20 pm.

Therefore, there was no real involvement of Vyshinsky in writing the note that has his name.

Interestingly, only a week after receiving the Vyshinsky Note, on August 25, the Swedish government decided to upgrade the representation in the Soviet Union and suggested the same to Soviet officials, to the ambassadorial level. From his side, Stalin approved this suggestion on August 30, 1947.<sup>72</sup>

### **The role of the former Soviet Ambassador in Stockholm, Alexandra Kollontay, in Moscow in 1945–1947**

There are more materials that should be studied in the AVPRF, for example the discussions between the former Soviet Ambassador to Stockholm, Alexandra Kollontay, and the Swedish Envoy Staffan Söderblom. [Fig. 40] Kollontay could certainly not have acted without official approval of the Soviet leadership. Even though she was almost an invalid, she was still formally an official advisor to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She must have reported regularly about her interactions with Söderblom, and she must have received specific instructions about these contacts.

During a conversation with a Swedish diplomat in 1970, Kollontay's personal physician, the Swedish Professor Nanna Svartz, related that she once had overheard a loud argument between Staffan Söderblom and Alexandra Kollontay, about Raoul Wallenberg. Professor Svartz indicated that Kollontay had apparently told Söderblom "that she believed that Raoul Wallenberg would be released next year." Svartz further stated that she considered the criticism Söderblom had received for his alleged negative role in the Wallenberg case "unjust."<sup>73</sup> [Fig. 41]

### **MID/KGB correspondence in 1955**

There is also a question regarding documentation of the Scandinavian Department in December 1955. As it is briefly described in the previous subchapters, in 1955 Mikhail Gribanov, head of the Scandinavian Department of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sent to the 1st KGB Main

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<sup>72</sup> From August 16 to November 21, 1947, Stalin was on vacation. He arrived in Yalta (Crimea) and on August 18, moved to the city of Sochi on a ship. After receiving Molotov's approval, on August 30, 1947, in a Top-Secret ciphered cable Vyshinsky reported to Stalin about the Swedish proposal. The same day Stalin answered that he agreed with the proposal. RGASPI. F. 558 (Stalin's documents). Op. 11. D. 106. Ll. 10, 11 (*newly obtained documents*). On September 18, on Molotov's suggestion, the Politburo appointed Iliya Chernyshev as the Soviet Ambassador to Stockholm. The document has Molotov's handwritten note: "C.[omrade] Stalin has approved this. V. M. 18/IX." RGASPI. F. 17 (Politburo materials). Op. 3. D. 1053. L. 28 (*a newly obtained document*).

<sup>73</sup> Private memorandum by Folke Löfgren, November 1, 1970.

Directorate a draft text of a future answer to the Swedes about Raoul Wallenberg.<sup>74</sup> It is known that such a letter existed from the KGB answer. However, Gribanov's original letter with the version about Wallenberg's fate he suggested has never been released from the AVPRF. Also, it is puzzling why Gribanov wrote to the KGB foreign intelligence, and not to the KGB leadership. Possibly, it will become clear if the AVPRF releases Gribanov's correspondence with the KGB in 1955.

## General comments

### The organizational structure of the Soviet State Security system and the chain of command

A lack of detailed knowledge about the Soviet administrative system and the chain of command posed serious problems for researchers of the Swedish side. Researchers initially had only a limited understanding of the frequent and complex internal reorganizations of the Soviet state security services during the years 1945-53. Researchers initially were not familiar with important administrative procedures, such as the internal and external reporting structure (chain of command) within and between specific agencies and departments/directorates in the Soviet state security apparatus. This includes, in particular, the different files and documents that were created during the investigative process of prisoners, during different stages of the investigation, i.e., for prisoners under investigation or sentenced prisoners. There also exists until today only limited knowledge about exactly what type of records were preserved and where they were archived. An additional problem with Russian archives is the fact that various relevant documents could be distributed over several different archives, in different geographical regions.<sup>75</sup>

First of all, it is important to understand that during Wallenberg's detention in 1945-47, two separate organizations, SMERSH/MGB and the NKVD/MVD, were involved in the fate of prisoners.<sup>76</sup> If the investigation of an arrested person were conducted by SMERSH/MGB at that time, in Moscow, the arrestee was kept in one of the NKGB/MGB investigative prisons the Internal, also called Lubyanka, as well as Lefortovo and Sukhanovo. Then, after the investigation was concluded and the accused person was sentenced, he or she was transferred under the authority of the Prison Directorate of the NKVD/MVD, which administrated punishment prisons and labor camps. After this, this NKVD/MVD Directorate sent the convict to a particular prison or a labor camp. Without conviction and transfer the convict under the NKVD/MVD authority, it

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<sup>74</sup> From 1949 to 1953, M. G. Gribanov (1906–1987) was a deputy head, then head of MID's 3rd European (Scandinavian) Department, from 1953 to 1955, he was again deputy head of this department, and from 1955 to April 1954, he headed this department, now called Scandinavian. See his biography at <http://www.knowbysight.info/GGG/02220.asp> (in Russian).

<sup>75</sup> For instance, collections of SMERSH and MGB documentation partly are kept in Moscow, in the FSB Central Archive, and partly, in the archive of the FSB Directorate of the Omsk Province in Siberia.

<sup>76</sup> On reorganizations of the NKVD/MVD, NKGB/MGB and SMERSH, see Birstein. *SMERSH, Stalin's Secret Weapon*. The work of Sergei Kartashov's SMERSH/MGB Department, as well as the investigation of a number of prisoners, including Wallenberg, by this department and their future fate are also discussed there.

was impossible to send a person, who would have been still in the SMERSH/MGB custody, to Vladimir Prison (at the time, it was in the NKVD/MVD system).<sup>77</sup>

Legally, Raoul Wallenberg had never been arrested since an arrest warrant, in SMERSH/MGB usually signed by Viktor Abakumov or his deputy, had never been issued. Without an arrest, a criminal investigation could not be started. In investigative prisons Lubyanka and Lefortovo Wallenberg was kept in the status of a detained prisoner-of-war, POW.<sup>78</sup> The 2nd SMERSH Department headed by Col. Sergei Kartashov was not investigative, but operational.<sup>79</sup> This means that prisoners under the jurisdiction of this department were interrogated to receive information from them, and not in the frame of a criminal investigation. For criminal investigation, there was a separate, the 6th (Investigative) SMERSH Department headed by Col. Aleksandr Leonov.

Kartashov's department had the same function when in mid-1946 it became the 4th Department of the 3rd MGB Main Directorate (military counterintelligence).<sup>80</sup> The 6th (investigative) Department also remained within this Directorate. In other words, if Raoul Wallenberg were arrested and criminally investigated within this Directorate, he would have been under the jurisdiction of the 6th, and not 4th Department.

Kartashov's 4th Department existed until mid-1948, when many prisoners under its jurisdiction were finally legally "arrested", charged, and convicted. In November 1948, Kartashov's department was disbanded, and the remaining prisoners were transferred under the jurisdiction of the MGB Department for Investigation of Especially Important Cases (OVD). However, their cases were not investigated. Only in 1950–52, now under the jurisdiction of the Investigative Department of the 2nd MGB Main Directorate (internal counterintelligence), these remaining prisoners were formally "arrested", investigated, charged, and convicted. But according to all our knowledge, Wallenberg's prison trace broke off in July 1947, when he was still under the jurisdiction of Kartashov's department and still not investigated, but preliminary interrogated. In the future research of the Wallenberg case, it would be necessary to take into consideration all these details.

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<sup>77</sup> Vladimir Prison became one of three MVD Special Prisons (as well as Aleksandrovsk and Verkhne-Uralsk prisons) only in mid-1948, when the whole system of keeping convicted political prisoners was reorganized and special labor camps and three prisons were established. On January 27, 1948, on Stalin's order MGB Minister Abakumov and MVD Minister Sergei Kruglov presented to the Politburo a draft of the reorganization. It was approved and adopted as the Decree of the Council of Ministers no. 416-159ss ("ss" means "Top Secret") on February 21, 1948. See details in N. Petrov. *History of the GULAG Empire. Chapter 16* (in Russian), <https://pseudology.org/GULAG/Glava16.htm>. In October 1949, the three special prisons were transferred under the MGB jurisdiction and became MGB Special Prisons (Decree of the Council of Minister no. 4723-1815ss dated October 13, 1949).

<sup>78</sup> The detainees kept without arrest warrants were also called "the special contingent."

<sup>79</sup> In 1991–93, former officers of Kartashov's department testified about the work of that department in front of the Arzhannikov Commission and Swedish representatives. However, the Swedish side did not pick up the information that the department, in whose custody Wallenberg was, was operational, and not investigative, as former officers said.

<sup>80</sup> N. V. Petrov. *Those Who Administrated the State Security Organs, 1941-1954. Reference Book*. Moscow: Zven'ya, 2010. P. 51 (in Russian).

The question of what happened to Raoul Wallenberg remains currently unsolved. It appears that most likely he was murdered in July 1947, but the burden of proof rests with the Russian authorities. Unhindered access to Moscow prison registers of arrivals and departures of prisoners, the registers for prisoners' personal possessions, as well as to the registers of calls for interrogations by independent researchers is necessary to establish the full facts of his fate.

### The system of numbering prisoners

Vital questions also persist about the Stalin era's system of isolating and numbering prisoners (both under investigation and after sentencing) during the years 1947–53.<sup>81</sup> **Despite numerous requests, the Russian side has never provided information about this system of numbering of prisoners.**

The practice to give temporary numbers instead of names was commonly used by NKVD and SMERSH/MGB investigators during investigation. How this happened is clear from the documents in the archival Personal File of one of prisoners remotely connected with the Wallenberg case, the Dutch Lieutenant Gerrit van der Waals.<sup>82</sup> Lt. Waals and a Hungarian Karoly Schandl were captured by SMERSH operatives near Budapest in December 1944 and brought to Lubyanka Prison on January 14, 1945. They were under the jurisdiction of Kartashov's department. On January 31, 1945, Kartashov's deputy Nikolai Burashnikov ordered a transfer of van der Waals and Schandl from Lubyanka to Lefortovo Prison. He wrote: "Place them in Cell 92 [of Lefortovo Prison]. Give Van der Waals the name 92-V, and Schandel, the name 92-K."<sup>83</sup> For a year, van der Waals was called for interrogations in Lefortovo Prison as Prisoner 92-V. Then, after in late January 1946 he was returned back to Lubyanka, he was called by his own name again. This example explains why Wallenberg, apparently, became Prisoner no. 7 after in March 1947 he was moved from Lefortovo to Cell 7 of Lubyanka Prison.

The numbering of some selected convicts in Vladimir Prison had nothing to do with the numbering during an investigation. Among the numbered prisoners in that punishment prison there were those prisoners who were arrested and then convicted directly on Stalin's order, like Konstantin Ordzhonikidze, who was put in solitary confinement in Vladimir already in 1944 (no. 3 was assigned to him, apparently, later), and the relatives and acquaintances of Stalin's wife Nadezhda Allilueva, who were sent to Vladimir after sentencing with numbers 21–23, while other convicts were placed in solitary confinement without numbers.<sup>84</sup> The last numbering was

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<sup>81</sup> To some extent these questions were discussed in Vadim Birstein and Susanne Berger. *The Fate of Raoul Wallenberg – Gaps in the Official Record* (2016), <http://www.vbirstein.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Questions-to-Russian-Archives-Long.pdf>.

<sup>82</sup> Personal File of H. van der Waals (File of the Arrested). Special Archive, Moscow (currently, the Russian State Military Archive, RGVA). Fond 465/p. Op. 10. No. 40242. Examined by V. Birstein in 1991.

<sup>83</sup> P. 1 in *ibid*.

<sup>84</sup> On K. Ordzhonikidze, see Report by S. N. Kruglov to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the necessity of release of K. K. Ordzhonikidze dated August 17, 1953. Document no. II-7 in: *Rehabilitation: How It Was. Documents of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Other Materials*. Vol. 1, compiled by A. Artizov et al. Moscow: Demokratiya, 2000. Pp. 63–64 (in Russian); on the Allilueva Case, see Birstein. *The Perversion of Knowledge*. Pp. 51–69, 434–43.

given, after sentencing in 1952, to two different groups of the members of former Baltic countries governments and their relatives. The Estonian and Latvian government members and some of their relatives were arrested in June 1941, just after the German attack on the Soviet Union, according to the list, apparently composed in Moscow. During the war, these people were kept in solitary confinement under their numbers on the primary list in NKVD/NKGB provincial investigative prisons, but investigation of their cases was stopped for 10 years.<sup>85</sup> After sentencing in 1952, they were assigned numbers 7–12 to be put in Vladimir Prison. The arrested members of the former Lithuanian government were brought to Moscow for trial in 1952 from the *Kraslag* labor camp in Siberia and also were assigned numbers after conviction (nos. 1, 2, 4–6, 30–32).<sup>86</sup> **Technically, until mid-1949, the numbers were assigned by the MVD Prison Directorate, and after Vladimir Prison was transferred to the MGB in 1949, by the MGB Prison Department.**

However, it is unclear at what level the decision about numbering in Vladimir Prison was made. In cases of Ordzhonikidze and the Alliluevs, all decisions were made by Stalin, and Abakumov only followed his instructions. Possibly, Stalin was also involved in the decision regarding Boris Menshagin (no. 29), the Burgomaster of the German-occupied city of Smolensk and a witness of the Katyn massacre.<sup>87</sup> In other cases, it is not known. But in all known cases numbers to some prisoners in Vladimir instead of names were provided only to convicted prisoners, and, therefore, a number to Wallenberg, who was even not formally arrested, could not be assigned.

**Additionally, Russian officials have yet to provide complete information about Swedish prisoners who were possibly incarcerated in Vladimir Prison during the 1950s and early 1960s. This material is urgently needed to either corroborate or dismiss the statements of witnesses who claimed to have met Raoul Wallenberg after 1947.**

There are smaller flaws in the description of Soviet security and diplomatic services in the Swedish Report. For instance, Lavrentii Beria was the NKVD Commissar until December 29, 1945, and not until “January 1945.” He became a Politburo member on March 18, 1946, and not a year before that, “in March 1945.” The description of SMERSH and the department of SMERSH/MGB that was in charge of the Wallenberg case also contains mistakes.<sup>88</sup> Vladimir

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<sup>85</sup> Report by R. A. Rudenko and I. A. Serov to the Central Committee of the CPSU on political prisoners – former leaders of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania dated June 1, 1954. Document no. III-16 in: *Rehabilitation: How It Was*. Pp. 153–54 (in Russian).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid and Report by R. A. Rudenko and I. A. Serov to the Central Committee of the CPSU on the Lithuanian political prisoners dated May 3, 1954. Document no. III-7 in *ibid*. Pp. 113–14.

<sup>87</sup> V. Birstein. *SMERSH, Stalin's Secret Weapon*. Moscow: AIRO-XXI, 2017. Pp. 716, 725 (in Russian).

<sup>88</sup> Here are a few examples. The statement “the counter espionage organization later known as Smersh which was placed under the army general staff” (p. 24) is incorrect. In fact, the name Main Directorate of Counterintelligence “SMERSH” was given to the military counterintelligence organization from the beginning of its creation within the Defense Commissariat (NKO). P. 97: “The MGB 3rd Main Directorate under which Kartashov’s section was previously placed.” Sergei Kartashov’s 4th Department (not a section, which is a smaller unit) that was in charge of Wallenberg’s case was *within* the 3rd MGB Main Directorate (military counterintelligence). P. 55: “Raoul Wallenberg was arrested on the order of the Deputy Minister of Defense Bulganin. Abakumov was also a Deputy Minister of Defense.” When Wallenberg was detained in January 1945, Abakumov was not a Deputy Defense



Dekanozov, one of the main figures who dealt with the Wallenberg case in the NKID/MID, was appointed Deputy Foreign Affairs Commissar on May 3, 1939, and not in 1944, five years later, as the report claims (p. 24).

While speaking about the chain of command, it should be explained by Russian authorities why Abakumov sent his letter dated July 17, 1945, regarding Wallenberg to Molotov's Secretariat in the Council of Ministers, and not to MID. This detail remains unclear in the Swedish Report. Abakumov addressed his letter to Molotov not in his capacity as Foreign Affairs Minister, but to Molotov as the 1st Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Stalin was the Chairman), the second person in the Soviet hierarchy. As a member of the Council of Ministers, MGB Minister Abakumov was subordinated to Molotov as Deputy Chairman of the Council, and not to Molotov as a Minister. The same way in December 1945 Abakumov answered to Molotov to the Council of Ministers, instead of MID, to MID's inquiry regarding the detained former Swiss diplomats in Budapest Harald Feller and Max Meier (Document D6 in the UD database). Besides, since Dekanozov and Vyshinsky's positions were deputy ministers, i.e., lower than his own, Abakumov preferred to address Molotov, to whom he was subordinated as a minister.

### **The hierarchical structure of the Soviet Commissariat/Ministry for Foreign Affairs (NKID/MID)**

Clearly, there was also little understanding by the Swedish side of the hierarchical structure within the NKID/MID, that Molotov called "centralized diplomacy." Regulations of the distribution of ciphered cables coming to the NKID/MID proposed by Stalin and Molotov is a good example of this system. The regulations were announced by the Politburo decision P45/31 of March 9, 1945 (apparently, Swedish authors were unaware of this decision):

1. All cipher telegrams of important political nature are sent only to C.[omrades] Stalin and Molotov.
2. Members of the Politburo [...] are getting acquainted with cipher telegrams of important political nature in [Stalin's Secretariat].  
Deputies of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs C.[omrades] Vyshinsky and Dekanozov are getting acquainted at the NKID by using individual copies.  
With respect to highly secret cipher telegrams, the order [of getting acquainted] is established by Comrade Molotov.
3. Deputies of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs are getting acquainted with cipher telegrams at the NKID [...] on the respective countries and on the issues in which they are directly involved in.
4. Heads of the NKID departments are getting acquainted with cipher telegrams in the NKID Cryptographic Department according to the countries and issues they are directly dealing with. Cipher telegrams for [...] the heads of departments are

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Commissar, he held this position only from April 19 to May 20, 1943. P. 26. Abakumov was arrested not in "June 1951," but on July 12, 1951.

selected by those deputies of the People's Commissar under whose responsibility these heads are.

The same concerned outgoing cables. After sending out, copies of the most secret cables signed by Stalin and Molotov were sent to them, while Vyshinsky and Dekanozov were allowed only to be acquainted with such cables.<sup>89</sup>

**All this means that the NKID/MID was entirely controlled from the top by Molotov, who informed Stalin and received direct instructions from him. And that, therefore, the exchanges with foreign diplomats were closely monitored and controlled.**

### **The importance of the list of addressees and notations on official documentation**

#### **a) The Dekanozov Note of December 16, 1945**

As already mentioned, for unexplainable reasons authors of the Swedish Report did not use crucial information on documents that identified the recipients of the document. This led to a number of misinterpretations. For instance, the Report considers the Dekanozov Note of December 16, 1945, a possible mistake, committed by Dekanosov in haste (p. 72). [Fig. 42]

**However, this hypothesis is totally wrong:**

a) In his January 16, 1945, Note Dekanozov simply cited the information he had received from Matvei Zakharov, head of the Staff of the 2nd Ukrainian Front, via the General Staff;

b) As the distribution list on Dekanozov's Note shows, the note was widely distributed within the NKID: Molotov, Vyshinsky, Dekanozov, Legal Department, 5th European Department (Scandinavia). There are two copies of the Note in Molotov's Fond/Collection (released in 2021), which demonstrate that Molotov was well aware of the Note. No person who had received a copy of the Note protested against Dekanozov's action as a supposed "mistake," including Molotov and the NKID Legal Department;

c) On January 18, 1945, Eric Boheman, Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, thanked Alexandra Kollontay, Soviet Ambassador to Stockholm, for saving Wallenberg (Kollontay's cable to Moscow on January 19, 1945; copies sent to Stalin, Molotov, Kliment Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Beria, Vyshinsky, Dekanozov, Lozovsky, Maxim Litvinov, Sergei Kavtaradze, Ivan Maisky). On January 26, 1945, Staffan Söderblom, Swedish Envoy to Moscow, thanked

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<sup>89</sup> See, for instance, Molotov's cable to Kollontay regarding Marcus Wallenberg, marked "Out of Turn" and dated 11.07.44 (released by MID in 2012); also, Stalin and Molotov's "Special," "Out of Turn" cable to President Harry Truman dated June 15, 1945, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/v3telegr.gif>. Cables signed by Vyshinsky, apparently, were sent after Molotov's approval, – see a cable to Semyon Bazarov (Stockholm) dated 19.07.47 (released by MID in 2012).

Dekanozov for the same (UD Document D2; copies of Dekanozov's report were sent to Molotov, Vyshinsky, Dekanozov, Lozovsky).

**Clearly, Soviet leaders, including Stalin and Molotov, knew about these acknowledgements and Dekanozov was not reprimanded as he would have been in case if his action was a "mistake." And it is clear that the UD officials also knew about the Note almost immediately after it was handed over to Söderblom.**

**b) Meetings of Staffan Söderblom and Aleksandr Abramov (1945–1946)**

Lists of addresses who received cables incoming to NKID/MID are also ignored in Swedish research papers, although the distribution was so important that, as mentioned above, it was prescribed by a special Politburo decision and was strongly followed in the NKID/MID. The fact that Stalin personally received two copies of each cable shows that he was aware of and controlled all activities of Soviet diplomatic representations abroad.

**This lack of attention to the lists of internal distribution of documents within NKID/MID led to some incorrect conclusions regarding the Wallenberg case. The hypothesis that meetings of Staffan Söderblom with Aleksandr Abramov on December 26, 1945, March 9, 1946, and April 30, 1946, when Wallenberg's whereabouts were discussed, were "not communicated to the Soviet Stockholm Legation, at least not by a cipher"<sup>90</sup> is an example.**

**In fact, transcripts of all three meetings were sent to the Soviet Envoy Iliya Chernyshev, possibly, by pouch:**

- a) The meeting on December 26, 1945 (Document D7 in the UD database). Söderblom detailed possible Wallenberg's death; Abramov's minutes were sent to: Molotov, Vyshinsky, Dekanozov, **Chernyshev**, 5th EO;
- b) The meeting on March 9, 1946 (Documents D11, F21 in the UD database – different copies). Söderblom handed a Note regarding Wallenberg over to Abramov. Abramov's minutes were sent to: Vyshinsky, Dekanozov, Novikov, **Chernyshev**, 5th EO; a copy of Söderblom's Note was also sent to **Chernyshev** (the MID's release in 2021);
- c) The meeting on April 30, 1946. Document reproduced as Attachment 14 in the Swedish Report (pp. 234–235). Copies of minutes were sent to: Lozovsky, **Chernyshev**, to the 5th EO;
- d) There was also a Swedish Note regarding Wallenberg dated November 1945 and handed by Söderblom. Copies were sent to: Vyshinsky, Dekanozov, [V.]

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<sup>90</sup> P. 350 in Johan Matz. "Cables in cipher, the Raoul Wallenberg case and Swedish-Soviet diplomatic communication 1944-1947." *Scandinavian Journal of History*. Vol. 38 (2013). Iss. 3: 344–366.

Belyaev [head of the Consulate Department], *Chernyshev* (the MID's release in 2021). [Fig. 43]

There are more examples when, according to the distribution lists, Chernyshev received copies of internal MID documentation regarding the Wallenberg case.<sup>91</sup>

**Therefore, Iliya Chernyshev received most of documentation regarding the Wallenberg case from Moscow. Evidently, archival ciphered cables alone did not reflect the real communication between the NKID/MID in Moscow and Soviet missions/embassies abroad.**

Close attention should be also paid to some other details of cables, such as the date and time when the cable was sent out from Stockholm, received in the NKID/MID in Moscow, and when it was deciphered, copies were typed and sent to Molotov or Boris Podtserob, Molotov's Senior Assistant. Not using this information led, for example, to the incorrect overestimation of the importance of three cables sent by Semyon Bazarov to Moscow in July 1947.<sup>92</sup> At the time, the highly anticipated answer from Viktor Abakumov, MGB Minister, was crucial for Molotov and MID's answer to the Swedes regarding the Wallenberg case. On July 17, 1947, Abakumov's Secretariat sent out his letter to Molotov's Secretariat at the Council of Ministers, and the same day it was registered there.

If one analyzes the time when the first and second of Bazarov's cables arrived in Moscow and were provided to Molotov, it was the morning of July 17.<sup>93</sup> Apparently, after reading these cables, Molotov added the name of Abakumov in his handwriting as an additional recipient, while not knowing that Abakumov's letter had already been waiting for him in his second Council of Ministers Secretariat.

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<sup>91</sup> For instance, a copy of the Swedish Note regarding Wallenberg dated July 12, 1946, as well a copy of the minutes of the meeting of Ivan Sysoev with Ulf Barck-Holts were sent to Chernyshev (Document F22 and D79, and copies newly released in 2021).

<sup>92</sup> See, for instance, p. 153 in Johan Matz. "All signs indicate that Gestapo agents murdered him': Soviet disinformation, the Katyn massacre and the Raoul Wallenberg 1945–7." *The International History Review*. Vol. 38 (2016). No.1: 148–173.

<sup>93</sup> Bazarov wrote **the first cable** on 15.07.47, it was sent out during the night, and arrived in the 10th (ciphering and deciphering) Department of MID at 8:30 am on 16.07.47. Then it was deciphered, and the deciphered copies were typed at 11:30 pm on 16.07.47. In other words, physically the copies were sent out and read on 17.07.47. At first Molotov read the cable in the morning of 17.07.47 and included the name of Abakumov in the list of recipients. In other words, Abakumov received his copy somewhere in the middle or end of 17.07.47 and it is not known for a fact that he read it immediately. **The second cable** was written and sent out on 16.07.47. It arrived in MID at 2:50 am on 17.07.47. It was deciphered, and copies were typed at 8:00 am. Most likely, Molotov read it in the morning of 17.07.47, added the name of Abakumov. Possibly, both the first and second cables were sent together to Abakumov on 17.07.47, when his letter to Molotov had already been received in Molotov's Secretariat in the Council of Ministers. **The third cable** was sent on 16.07.47, apparently, soon after the second. It arrived at 6:40 am on 17.07.47. It was deciphered, and copies were typed at 4:00 am on 18.07.47. Now Abakumov's name was included from the beginning. Molotov read it in the morning of 18.07.47 and approved the list of recipients. After that, copies were sent out.

That fact that on July 22, 1947, Vyshinsky sent Abakumov an additional request to report to MID about Wallenberg happened simply because Vyshinsky did not know about Abakumov's letter to Molotov of July 17. Mikhail Vetrov reported to Kirill Novikov and then on his instruction to Vyshinsky about Abakumov's letter only on July 23 (Document D23 in the UD database).

**Therefore, Bazarov's cables could not influence the situation with the preparation of the Vyshinsky Note because when they were distributed, Abakumov had already made his proposals regarding Wallenberg to Molotov.**

## **The 75-year secrecy rule in Russia**

**The foregoing once again underscores the pressing need for a systematic and independent review of original Russian archive documentation by qualified researchers. This was a serious shortcoming of the bilateral Working Group investigation. The consequences of these omissions and representations on both sides continue to affect the Raoul Wallenberg investigation to this day.**

Raoul Wallenberg's family and researchers cannot rely on assurances from Russian officials that some of the currently classified documentation from 1947 (the most crucial year in the Wallenberg case) will become available when the current 75-year classification period expires in 2022. Recent examples show that Russian authorities can simply extend the current secrecy designations, as just happened in the case of records related to the former Soviet state security official Pavel Sudoplatov. As already mentioned, in response to our request to declassify an important memorandum, compiled by the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1968 about the investigation of Pavel Sudoplatov and Naum Eitingon activities as head and deputy head of the MGB "DR" (terrorism) Service Ministry (MGB), the so-called Interdepartmental Commission for Protection of State Secrets not only refused our request but extended the classification period to the year 2044!

## **The following questions remain:**

**In Russia:**

same as above plus:

- Where is the missing internal correspondence and detailed information (from Vetrov, Novikov, Malik) about the creation of the Vyshinsky Note?
- If Vinogradov and Khristoforov are correct that Prisoner no. 7 is identical with Raoul Wallenberg, does that mean the Smoltsov Report is a forgery or invalid?
- Why have we not been permitted to review the file in which Willy Rödel's documentation has been preserved? If it contains also Count Bethlen's documentation, as Col. Vinogradov claimed, it would be important to examine it.

**In Sweden:**

- Why did Swedish officials fail to reveal crucial information that showed that Soviet State Security General Pavel Sudoplatov did not have any direct information about Raoul Wallenberg whatsoever, as he freely admitted as early as 1994?
- Regarding Prisoner no. 7, why did Swedish officials not publicly express any shock or anger in 2009 when they learned that Russian officials had withheld key information in the Wallenberg case for more than three decades?
- And why did Swedish representatives not energetically pursue this most sensational piece of information to emerge in the Wallenberg case since 1957, when it was finally revealed in 2009?
- Furthermore, it needs to be examined why Swedish officials as late as 2011 and again in 2019 failed to disclose to Wallenberg's family and to researchers that Russian officials, in fact, had confirmed that Raoul Wallenberg was identical with Prisoner no. 7 – a central piece of information for our continuing investigation.
- It needs to be clarified in greater detail why Swedish officials repeatedly failed to insist on access to original documentation during the time of the Working Group which allowed the Russian side to withhold and manipulate important details in the Wallenberg investigation.
- Another important unresolved question is what information the Swedish authorities [and also the Russian government] possessed and currently possess about other Swedish nationals or citizens imprisoned in Russia after 1945? This would have made (and still make) the inquiry into Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance much more effective.
- Additionally, it must be determined if the Swedish government had any concerns about the public disclosure of extensive neutrality violations or other controversial aspects of Raoul Wallenberg's work in Hungary.
- In addition, the new investigation should examine in detail how the various reasons and motives behind Sweden's extreme passivity affected the official investigation of the Wallenberg case in 1945-47 and in later years, including during the 1990s and throughout the mid-2000s.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

A closer examination of the background facts in the Wallenberg case potentially leads to important changes in the interpretation of specific aspects of his story. 76 years after Wallenberg's disappearance, several key questions remain unresolved:

- What happened to Raoul Wallenberg in the crucial summer of 1947?
- Why did the Soviet leader Josef Stalin order Raoul Wallenberg's detention and why did he never release him?

- And, viewed from the Swedish perspective, why were the efforts on Wallenberg's behalf so passive?

On the Swedish side of the investigation, of special interest is the question why Swedish officials so readily accepted the rumors and Soviet disinformation that Raoul Wallenberg was dead or could not be saved almost immediately after his disappearance in Hungary in January 1945, in the absence of convincing evidence, when there were plenty of reasons (and rumors) to assume that he could well be alive? In contrast to the statements of earlier investigation, we argue that, based on the currently available record, Stalin's intentions about Raoul Wallenberg are not entirely clear. Moreover, there existed a real possibility to press the Soviet government for clarification of Wallenberg's disappearance, in particular during the year 1946.

In summary, it appears that almost immediately after Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance in Hungary in January 1945, key Swedish Foreign Ministry officials silently accepted not only that Wallenberg may not be located or released from imprisonment, but that *even if he were alive, he could not – and perhaps should not? – be saved*. It is this purely pragmatic and detached approach to Wallenberg's fate that drove his mother Maj von Dardel to despair. She openly accused Swedish officials of being "cold blooded" and wishing her son dead.

**A new analysis by the Swedish historian Peter Axelsson suggests that the strong desire by the Swedish government in 1946 to conclude a huge \$300 million [\$4 billion in today's value] bilateral credit and trade agreement may have led to a conscious decision on the part of some Swedish officials to prioritize Sweden's broader national interest over the need to solve Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance.**

**Axelsson argues that Swedish officials possibly felt that they could not do both: Successfully negotiate an agreement with the Soviet Union and at the same time press the Soviet leadership for information about Raoul Wallenberg.**

Also, contrary to how it is generally portrayed, Swedish diplomats apparently felt quite comfortable to discuss and coordinate several sensitive issues with their Soviet counterpart. These included the return of 150 Baltic prisoners to the Soviet Union, along with approx. 3,000 German prisoners of war; the repatriation of Soviet soldiers from Norway, via Swedish territory, as well as of 2,158 former Soviet servicemen and civilians interned in Sweden; and secretly arranging the recall of Staffan Söderblom from Moscow in the spring of 1946, where the two sides agreed to make it appear that the request had come from the Soviet leadership. Meanwhile, Swedish representatives did not raise the question of Raoul Wallenberg's fate in any of these discussions.

**In the meantime, the newly discovered during recent years documents confirmed that the Soviet dictator Josef Stalin was directly involved in all important decisions on Swedish affairs, including the Wallenberg case, the trade with Sweden, and the conclusion of the Trade and Credit Agreement.**

**The central question that emerges and members of Raoul Wallenberg's family now urgently want to have answered, is why he was, apparently, expendable to Swedish officials precisely at a moment when the Soviet leadership had signaled a more conciliatory attitude towards Sweden and when it appeared that Wallenberg was still alive. (The autumn of 1945-1946).** Even when a large Swedish-Soviet credit and trade agreement was concluded in record time in October 1946, Swedish officials did not bother to take up the Raoul Wallenberg case with their Soviet counterparts, even though they had several opportunities to do so.

**The precise motives and intentions behind the official Swedish attitude to Wallenberg's disappearance are now beginning to come into sharper focus. In contrast to earlier claims, Sweden's lack of decisive action does not seem to have been simply the result of administrative failures, chaotic post-war conditions, individual incompetence, Wallenberg's status as an "outsider" or Sweden's overwhelming fear of the Soviet Union.**

**Instead, the new research findings strongly suggest that the Swedish government's extreme passivity in the Raoul Wallenberg case appears to have been an intentional decision by a select group of Swedish officials who placed Sweden's economic and political interests, as they defined it, over the need to clarify the fate of their fellow diplomat.**

Additionally, new research indicates that Raoul Wallenberg may have been compromised in the eyes of some Swedish representatives through his connections to Swedish intelligence operations in Hungary in 1943–1944.<sup>94</sup>

These operations began in the autumn of 1943 and were conducted in close cooperation with American, Hungarian, and also British intelligence representatives. They were at least partially directed against the Soviet Union and may have already involved important post-war considerations. Swedish participation in such actions were complicated by the fact that since June 1941 Sweden officially represented Soviet interests in Hungary. **Swedish authorities have never formally acknowledged these operations and practically no documentation exists about them from Swedish archival sources.**

The early Swedish intelligence interests and activities in Hungary in 1943 – almost a full year before Wallenberg's diplomatic appointment – give rise to the question if Wallenberg had any

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<sup>94</sup> Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein. *The 1943–1944 Secret Swedish-Hungarian Intelligence Agreement*.



knowledge of or connections to these plans and if his selection for the humanitarian mission to Budapest in June 1944, to protect Hungary's Jews from Nazi persecution, was as unexpected as it generally has been portrayed.

It must also be determined if the Swedish government had any concerns about the public disclosure of extensive neutrality violations or other controversial aspects of Raoul Wallenberg's work in Hungary.

**This includes the question whether Swedish officials worried about rumors that Raoul Wallenberg and the papers he was carrying at the time of his disappearance could be used in planned trials of individuals who had supported Nazi Germany during the war.**

The new investigation should examine in detail how the various reasons and motives behind Sweden's extreme passivity affected the official investigation of the Wallenberg case in 1945-47 and in later years, including during the 1990s and throughout the mid-2000s.

The new research insights lead to a potential reevaluation of several key actors in the Wallenberg mystery, especially those of Ambassador Staffan Söderblom and other Swedish officials, including Sverker Åström, one of Sweden's top diplomats in the post-war era who is suspected of having functioned as a Soviet asset throughout his lengthy career.

76 years after Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance in Hungary, and nine years after Mr. Åström's death, Swedish authorities should disclose once and for all if the allegations against one of Sweden's leading diplomats were true or false. Until then, the shadow of suspicion that undue Soviet influence in the Swedish foreign policy apparatus during the post-war years, and even in more recent times, may have had palpable and potentially detrimental effects on the official Swedish handling of the case of Raoul Wallenberg, one of Sweden's most admired persons, continues to persist. In any other European country such a state of affairs would be a scandal. In Sweden, the unresolved suspicions about Mr. Åström and other officials, like the longtime Swedish Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Rolf Sohlman, have become normalized. This is an unacceptable situation.

There are strong indications that both Swedish and Russian officials intentionally kept the focus of the Wallenberg investigation very narrow, misrepresented and omitted important details and information in the case from their respective official reports, and failed to provide access to key documentation to researchers and Wallenberg's family.

This includes the clearly intentional and egregious withholding of documentation regarding a Prisoner no. 7 who was interrogated in the Internal (Lubyanka) Prison in Moscow on July 22 and 23, 1947. Russian officials had failed to share this crucial information with the official Swedish-Russian Working Group (1991-2000), which included Wallenberg's brother Dr. Guy von Dardel.

Instead, they released it only almost twenty years later, in 2009. Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that the prisoner was indeed Raoul Wallenberg, which means that he was apparently alive six days after his official death date of July 17, 1947.

Why did Swedish officials not express any shock or anger at this serious omission? And why did Swedish representatives not energetically pursue this most sensational piece of information to emerge in the Wallenberg case since 1957, when it was finally revealed in 2009? Furthermore, it needs to be examined why Swedish officials as late as 2011 and again in 2019 failed to disclose to Wallenberg's family and to researchers that Russian officials, in fact, had confirmed that Raoul Wallenberg was identical with Prisoner no. 7 – a central piece of information for our continuing investigation.

Raoul Wallenberg's family and researchers have argued for years that there are many reasons to be skeptical of Russian claims that no additional information at all exists about Wallenberg or his fate in Russian archives. The statements by FSB officials Lt. Gen. V. Khristoforov and Col. Vladimir Vinogradov, acknowledging that Raoul Wallenberg could have been alive six days after his official death raise important questions about the official Soviet and also Russian government's version of Raoul Wallenberg's death, supposedly of a heart attack in his prison cell on July 17, 1947.

**If Russian officials have nothing to hide, why did they withhold the information about Prisoner no. 7 until 2009, when they have known about the information for decades? Do Russian officials actually know what happened to Raoul Wallenberg?** The claims by FSB Director Sergei Stepashin and other Russian officials during the 1990s, that Wallenberg was shot to death, need to be fully clarified; so, do certain aspects of selected witness testimonies which contain information that Raoul Wallenberg possibly survived for some time in Soviet imprisonment.

The new information that has come to light in recent years lends even greater urgency to researchers' requests for direct access and full disclosure of specific records, in Russia as well as in Sweden.

**One more question is: Why did the Swedish authorities not released the answers to the questions posed by Swedish officials in 1994, and written by the former Lt. General Pavel Sudoplatov, who explicitly stated that he did not know about Wallenberg and his case until publications in the Russian media in the early 1990s? Hiding Sudoplatov's statement from the public for years resulted in the release of numerous incorrect publications that claimed that Sudoplatov knew of Wallenberg's death by poison.**

Another important unresolved issue is what information do the Swedish authorities [and also the Russian government] possess about other Swedish nationals or citizens imprisoned in

Russia after 1945? This information would make the inquiry into Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance much more effective.

**As a result, Raoul Wallenberg's family and researchers are calling for a new, independent inquiry into the full reasons for these misrepresentations and omissions in both Russia and Sweden and the continued failure to solve Raoul Wallenberg fate.<sup>95</sup>**

The new inquiry should also examine if there existed a spoken or unspoken understanding with Russian officials to exclude specific subjects or issues from the investigation (by limiting the scope of the inquiry, for example). Secondly, it should be determined if the investigation was primarily intended to solve the mystery of Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance or if its main purpose was to remove the Wallenberg case from the official Swedish-Russian political agenda.

**Most importantly, we urge the Swedish government to press Russian authorities directly for the release of crucial documentation, in uncensored form, in the Wallenberg case that we have repeatedly requested.**

## Attachments

1. Vadim Birstein and Susanne Berger. *Raoul Wallenberg's Fate: Gaps in the official Record – the Russian catalogue of questions* (2016)
2. Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein. *Raoul Wallenberg's Fate: Gaps in the official Record – the Swedish catalogue of questions* (2017)
3. List of the most important requests pending in Russian archives (Marie von Dardel-Dupuy), Louise von Dardel, 2021)
4. Hans Magnusson. *Lägesbedömning* (2012) [Official Review 2012 - RWI-70](#)
5. Vadim Birstein. *The Wallenberg Case: Pavel Sudoplatov's Lies and the Silence of the FSB*. (2019)
6. Vadim Birstein. *Raoul Wallenberg in Ivan Serov's Memoir*. (2016)
7. Power Point File, Illustrations for the presentation to the Swedish Parliament (Berger-Birstein), August 26, 2021

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<sup>95</sup> [\(PDF\) Why members of Raoul Wallenberg's family and researchers are calling for a new, independent investigation in the Raoul Wallenberg case | Susanne Berger - Academia.edu](#)