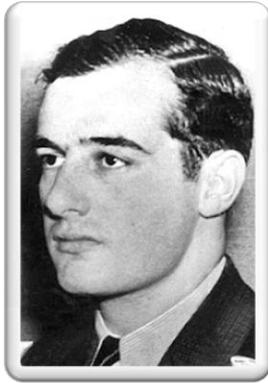


# Raoul Wallenberg

09 May 2013

3 Comments



**Raoul Wallenberg** (1912 -1947?) was a Swedish architect, businessman and diplomat widely celebrated for rescuing nearly one hundred thousand Jews in Hungary during the Holocaust. As Sweden's special envoy in Budapest, Wallenberg issued protective passports in 1944 and sheltered Jews in diplomatically controlled buildings, saving many tens of thousands of lives. Wallenberg was detained by the Soviets in January 1945 and was reported to have died in July of 1947 in the KGB headquarters and prison in Moscow. Motives for Wallenberg's arrest and imprisonment by the Soviets, circumstances of his death and possible ties to US intelligence are still speculated.

*Q: Mr. Wallenberg, may I thank you now, in advance, for your willingness to approach and speak?*

**RW:** Yes, you may but there is no need.

*Q: I knew your name but had no idea you were an architect; let me ask, do you like Frank Lloyd Wright's work?*

**RW:** Yes, not completely. There are examples I do not.

*Q: Why?*

**RW:** Interior darkness of some buildings, some houses. More light should enter.

*Q: I know the readership here wants to hear about the Soviets, not architecture.*

**RW:** Architecture is a metaphor of humanity, the design of a dwelling is the design of societies, all providing shelter, comfort and a place of association.

*Q: Were you connected to US intelligence?*

**RW:** What does connected mean to you? I was contacted by them, through US diplomats although I knew the diplomats that came to me were not career professionals in diplomacy.

*Q: How did you know?*

RW: They were too knowledgeable, practiced and even a bit stiff in their ways, compared to diplomats I was accustomed to seeing. They were too practiced.

*Q: Isn't that expected or why would it be unusual?*

RW: A diplomat must be serious and determined about the mission, of course, but the role requires an ease of dealing with others. Seriousness begets it, and this is not the best starting ingredient for diplomatic work.

*Q: What did the Americans want?*

RW: To know what I could tell them about Hungary, which was nearly nothing.

*Q: They suspected you of working on behalf of Sweden to achieve other things than a diplomat would usually do?*

RW: Of course, and wanted to help. They knew Sweden would not inform them about diplomatic activities any more than they would inform Sweden about US diplomatic activity and they suspected a Special Envoy implied a special purpose. There was none beyond acting as a better, somewhat less constrained set of eyes and ears for Stockholm.

*Q: What were you hoping to see?*

RW: Germany was not interested in annexation of invaded territories, as history shows. Hitler wanted domination and control by Germany, not inter-mixture. Hungary was likely to give indications or clues about German plans for management of its eventual empire, much like the Ottoman Empire and others had done. These things would affect Swedish interests, especially in trade between Scandinavian countries and the remainder of Europe and of course, Russia. My mission was to observe what could be found out.

*Q: Why did you do what you did to save people from extermination?*

RW: It was easy and obvious, and Germany was hurt and distracted from its mission of extermination. This is not to say it did not and would not continue but the numbers of people saved in Hungary were an amount easy for Germany to overlook.

*Q: What was the reason the Soviets gave you for your detention?*

RW: None, I was simply seized and taken to Moscow.

*Q: How did you die?*

RW: I was starved to death, slowly. I was steadily interrogated about nearly every possible connection that could be made to anything the Soviets believed to be a threat. I had nothing to tell them and I do not think they believed me.

*Q: Why the intense interest in a Swedish envoy who obviously disliked their bitter, hated enemy?*

RW: Soviet paranoia about the USA. In the line of questioning put to me and what I learned immediately upon my passing, was the abject fear the Soviets held regarding the United States. Much of Hitler's atrocity in Germany copied Stalin's methods in the USSR. There were not many differences; the determination showed by the USA against both Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan worried the Russians terribly, that they might come under similar siege.

*Q: They believed you were a part of this?*

RW: Yes, they were convinced. They were certain I must have been given guarantees, offers of protection and access to certain knowledge in order for me to act as I did. The Soviets also saw threats in Judaism, your history demonstrates Soviet behavior towards Jews. They bitterly hated Nazi Germany for its invasion attempt, but this made them no friends with Jews. They were suspect of me, that I would stick my neck out for what they saw as nothing in return.

*Q: What did you tell the American diplomats you suspected were not?*

RW: What I knew, which was very little. They seemed satisfied with either my answers or their inability to extract more information they might have believed I was not prepared to reveal, as they saw it.

*Q: Wouldn't they want to contact Stockholm?*

RW: They were certain, as I mentioned, Stockholm would politely decline discussion of specifics just as Americans would, given reversed circumstances, so they were certain I would know more. Thus the approach in Budapest.

*Q: At some point the Soviets must have known you had nothing to offer them, so why wouldn't they release you?*

RW: To have me return to Stockholm and tell my story? If there was one thing I knew about Russian leaders, it was pride and sensitivity about their actions. So they effectively left me to rot, which I did. The propaganda risk and cost of possible exposure was too high for them. There would have been regular, periodic denuncements of anything I might say that could be interpreted as negative but even this cost was too high. They were paranoid about press reports painting unflattering pictures. Letting me waste away was easiest.

*Q: If you could offer one bit of advice based on the life of Raoul Wallenberg, what would it be?*

RW: Speak your mind and keep the guns loaded. If concern for defending yourself is worrisome, I can assure you, it will be far more so to remain blissfully unprepared as the need arrives.

*Q: I will assume you were not the only political pawn or detainee held by the Soviets?*

RW: No, what was done to me was common. I was unknown in the Soviet Union, so no explanation was necessary there.

*Q: Was there concern in Stockholm for what you were doing in Hungary?*

RW: No; Sweden knew Germany was unlikely to attack or invade over my activity. I was not the

only person who sought to protect potential victims. Germany was pragmatic and wanted domination of valuable assets. Sweden was not significant enough to justify the military force and Stockholm knew this.

*Q: Is the need for personal worry at the hands of a tyrannical government going to remain or diminish on Earth?*

RW: Both; the need will reduce by circumstances that cause governmental power to decline; the influence of a central authority will fade. This is not to say all such desire to control and dominate will fade away evenly and happily; humanity and her societies don't work this way. Good intentions don't penetrate every interest and a few among the un-penetrated, react badly.

*Q: Mr. Wallenberg, my thanks again.*

RW: It was my honor and enjoyment, be well all of you.

### **Comments**

**Sarah** 09 May 2013 12:23pm

Excellent post that also coincide with Obama's visit to Sweden, I've always wondered how his life ended, as always good job Patrick.

**Thankful** 09 May 2013 1:03pm

tack so mycket Patrick, also in the name of some whose family members were rescued by Wallenberg

**Bridget** 09 May 2013 7:12pm

Always have wondered.