



PHOTO: PER WISSING/GT/TT

Charlotte Gyllenhammar's creation in Gothenburg is one of many Raoul Wallenberg monuments around the world.

## RAOUL WALLENBERG:

# ONE MAN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Armed only with his bravery and moral courage, Raoul Wallenberg saved tens of thousands of Jews from the Holocaust. It's a story that has inspired the world. Wallenberg's achievements are a reminder of the continuing need to fight racism.

In Jerusalem there is a memorial, Yad Vashem, dedicated to the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis during World War II. A street named 'Avenue of the Righteous' runs through the area, bordered by 600 trees planted to honour the memory of non-Jewish individuals who risked their lives to save Jews from the Nazi executioners. One of these trees bears the name of Raoul Wallenberg.

### An honorary citizen

Few Swedes have received as much international acclaim and attention as Raoul Wallenberg. In 1981, he became the second of just eight people to be named honorary citizens of the United States to this day. Others on that list include Winston Churchill and Mother Teresa. Wallenberg is also an honorary

citizen of Canada (1985), Israel (1986) and Australia (2013), as well as of Hungary's capital, Budapest (2003).

### Centenary in 2012

Around the world there are monuments, statues, and other works of art that honour Wallenberg. His memory is preserved through books, music and films, and many buildings, squares, streets, schools and other institutions bear his name.

2012 was the centenary of Wallenberg's birth. Yet his humanitarian achievements live on, a continuing reminder that every individual has a responsibility in the fight against racism. They show the importance of personal courage and of taking a stand – because one individual can make a difference.

### Shelter in 'Swedish houses'

A diplomat and businessman, Wallenberg was appointed legation secretary of the Swedish diplomatic mission in Budapest in June 1944. His job was to launch a rescue operation for Jews, and he became head of a special department. By issuing protective Swedish passports and renting buildings – 'Swedish houses' where Jews could seek shelter – he saved tens of thousands of lives.

In January 1945, Wallenberg was imprisoned by Soviet forces. His fate remains unknown. Russia claims he died in a Soviet prison on 17 July 1947. However, many witness reports suggest he may have been alive much later. ■

## LEARN MORE

## RAOUL WALLENBERG PRIZE

Since 2013, Sweden officially celebrates Raoul Wallenberg Day on 27 August. On that date, the Swedish Raoul Wallenberg Prize (*Raoul Wallenberg-priset*) is awarded a person who works in the spirit of Raoul Wallenberg, primarily raising young people's awareness about xenophobia, intolerance and human equality.

## RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE

The institute's mission is to promote universal respect for human rights and humanitarian law through research, academic education, dissemination of information and institutional development. [rwi.lu.se](http://rwi.lu.se)

## THE INTERNATIONAL RAOUL WALLENBERG FOUNDATION

A non-governmental organisation whose mission is to develop educational programmes and public awareness campaigns based on the values of solidarity and civic courage, ethical cornerstones of the Saviors of the Holocaust. [raoulwallenberg.net](http://raoulwallenberg.net)

## RAOUL WALLENBERG ACADEMY

The Raoul Wallenberg Academy was formed in 2001 with a mission to inspire young individuals to take action to prevent persecutions and promote equal rights. The academy uses Raoul Wallenberg and his achievements as a model to train young Swedes to this end. [rwa.se](http://rwa.se)

## SEARCHING FOR RAOUL WALLENBERG

Searching for Raoul Wallenberg is a network of independent researchers trying to determine what happened to him. They believe there are many unanswered questions that warrant a thorough investigation before the question of Wallenberg's fate can be laid to rest. [raoul-wallenberg.eu](http://raoul-wallenberg.eu)



A US Postal Service stamp commemorating Raoul Wallenberg.



Raoul Wallenberg (right) surrounded by colleagues in Budapest, 1944.

## PROTECTIVE PASSPORTS SAVED JEWS

By issuing protective passports and creating safe houses, Wallenberg saved tens of thousands of Jews in Budapest.

In 1944, the United States established the War Refugee Board (WRB), an organisation whose task was to save Jews from Nazi persecution. Once the WRB understood that Sweden was making serious attempts to save Jews in Hungary, it set out to find someone who could launch a major rescue operation in Budapest. Wallenberg was offered the job and accepted.

Prior to Wallenberg's arrival in Budapest, Valdemar Langlet, a delegate of the Swedish Red Cross, was assisting the Swedish Legation. Langlet rented buildings on behalf of the Red Cross and put up signs such as 'Swedish Library' and 'Swedish Research Institute' on their doors. These buildings then served as hiding places for Jews.

## Printed thousands of passports

The first thing Wallenberg did was to design a protective Swedish passport.

German and Hungarian bureaucrats had a weakness for symbology, so he had the passports printed in blue and yellow with the Swedish coat of arms in the centre. He furnished the passports with appropriate stamps and signatures. Wallenberg managed to convince the Hungarian Foreign Ministry to approve

4,500 protective passports. In reality, he issued three times as many. Towards the end of the war, when conditions were desperate, Wallenberg issued a simplified version of his protective passport that bore only his signature. In the prevailing chaos, even this worked.

To achieve his objectives, Wallenberg used anything from bribery to threats of blackmail. The other diplomats of the Swedish Legation were initially sceptical of his unconventional methods. But when Wallenberg's efforts yielded results, he quickly received backing. His department expanded, and there were several hundred people working there at its peak.

On 20 November 1944, Adolf Eichmann instigated a series of death marches, in which thousands of Jews were forced to leave Hungary on foot under extremely harsh conditions. Wallenberg helped them by distributing passports, food and medicine. In January 1945, the Russians arrived in Budapest. On 17 January, Wallenberg was arrested by Soviet forces.

The search for Raoul Wallenberg Wallenberg's fate remains an intriguing mystery. There is still no clear picture of what happened to him after his arrest. In April 1945, it became clear that ▶

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THE WALLENBERG MEDAL

The Wallenberg Medal is a US prize for humanitarian efforts. It has been awarded since 1990 by the Wallenberg Endowment of the University of Michigan, for exceptional humanitarian efforts. On the front of the medal is an image of Raoul Wallenberg, and the motto 'One Person Can Make a Difference'. In 2010, the prize went to Denis Mukwege, a Congolese gynaecologist and hospital director who has brought attention to the cause of women victims of sexual violence in war zones.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
RAOUL WALLENBERG PRIZE

Since 2014, the Council of Europe Raoul Wallenberg Prize is awarded every two years to reward extraordinary humanitarian achievements by a single individual, a group of individuals or an organisation. The prize ceremony is held at the Council of Europe offices on 17 January, the date of Raoul Wallenberg's arrest in Budapest in 1945.

The first prize was awarded to Elmas Arus, a young Roma film director from Turkey. The prize recognised her outstanding contributions to raising awareness about the conditions of the Roma people in Turkey and elsewhere. Elmas Arus established the "Zero Discrimination" Organisation, which has paved the way for other similar groups: there are now over 200 Roma associations in Turkey.

EDUCATION IN THE SPIRIT  
OF WALLENBERG

There are many schools around the world named after Raoul Wallenberg, and whose teaching is inspired by his achievements. In Sweden, there is the independent Raoul Wallenberg School. The spirit of Wallenberg, embodying honesty, sympathy, courage, and the ability to take action, is integral to its activities.

The school's teaching philosophy is that 'no one should be held back and no one should be left behind.' Examples of schools outside Sweden are Raoul Wallenberg High School in Brooklyn, New York; Raoul Wallenberg Human Szakközépiskola es Gimnázium in Budapest, Hungary; and Raoul-Wallenberg-Oberschule in Berlin, Germany.

► Wallenberg really had disappeared. Information from the Russians indicated that Wallenberg was not in the Soviet Union. In the early 1950s, returning prisoners of war testified that they had met Wallenberg in prison in Moscow. This led to renewed Swedish efforts. In 1957, the Soviet government gave a new answer. They had found a handwritten document, dated 17 July 1947, stating that 'the prisoner Wallenberg [sic]... died last night in his cell.'

Sweden was sceptical but Russia stuck to this story for more than 30 years. In October 1989, demands from the Swedish government and Wallenberg's family led to a breakthrough. Representatives of the family were invited to Moscow for a discussion. On that occasion, Wallenberg's passport, pocket calendar and other possessions were handed over to the family. They had apparently been found during repairs at the KGB archives.

Two years later, the Swedish and Soviet governments agreed to appoint a joint working group to clear up the facts about Wallenberg's fate. Their reports were published in January 2001. The group's work did not produce any definitive answers; they concluded that many important questions were still unanswered, and that Wallenberg's dossier could therefore not be closed.



PHOTO: ARTHUR MAX/TT

Wallenberg's personal effects were handed over by Russia in 1989.

**A diplomatic failure**  
In October 2001, the Swedish government appointed an official commission of inquiry, the Eliasson Commission, to investigate the actions of Sweden's foreign policy establishment in the Raoul Wallenberg case. In 2003, a report was issued in which Swedish political moves were summarised under the heading 'A diplomatic failure'. ■



PHOTO: SEBASTIAN SCHEINERT/TT

The Hall of Names at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem.

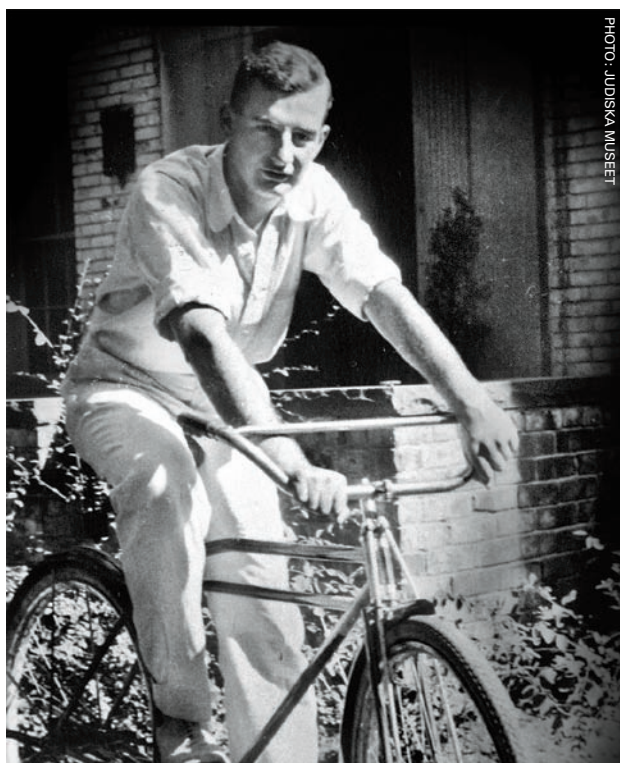


PHOTO: JUDISKA MUSEET



IMAGE SOURCE: KARL GABOR

In 1931, Raoul Wallenberg went to the US to study architecture, English, German and French.

## THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB

How was it possible for one person to save so many lives? Raoul Wallenberg was the right man in the right place at the right time.

Raoul Wallenberg was not the heroic type in the conventional sense, but he was fearless and a skilled negotiator and organiser. That was how the Swedish diplomat Per Anger (1913–2002) described him. Anger was stationed in Budapest during the war as a secretary at the Swedish Legation. Furthermore, Wallenberg's background and upbringing furnished him with unique skills.

### Studied architecture abroad

The Wallenberg family is one of Sweden's most prominent, with generations of leading bankers, diplomats and statesmen. Raoul's father was a cousin of Jacob and Marcus Wallenberg, two of Sweden's best-known financiers and industrialists of the 20th century. The plan was for Raoul to go into banking, but he was more interested in architecture and trade. In 1931, he went to study architecture at the University of Michigan in the United States where he also studied English, German and French.

On returning to Sweden in 1935, he found that his US degree did not qualify him to work as an architect. Between

1935 and 1936, Wallenberg held a position at a branch office of the Holland Bank in Haifa, Palestine, in present-day Israel. During this time, he first came into contact with Jews who had fled Hitler's Germany. Their stories moved him deeply.

### Worked his way to the top

Back in Stockholm, he obtained a job at the Central European Trading Company, an import-export company with operations in Stockholm and central Europe, owned by Koloman Lauer, a Hungarian Jew. Wallenberg's linguistic skills, and the fact that he could travel freely around Europe, made him the perfect business partner for Lauer. It was not long before he was a major shareholder and the international manager of the firm. His travels to Nazi-occupied France and to Germany soon taught him how German bureaucracy worked – knowledge that would prove highly valuable.

### Protected by his diplomatic status

Wallenberg was also a talented actor, which was a big help in his clashes with the Nazis. He could be calm, humorous

and warm, or aggressive and intimidating. He could flatter and bribe on one occasion, and shout and threaten on another. The Nazis were impressed by him and usually gave in to his demands. Another important factor was his Swedish diplomatic status, which the Germans did not violate.

The last time Per Anger saw Wallenberg, on 10 January 1945, he urged him to seek safety. Wallenberg replied, 'To me there's no other choice. I've accepted this assignment and I could never return to Stockholm without the knowledge that I'd done everything in human power to save as many Jews as possible.' ■

## BIOGRAPHY IN BRIEF

**Born:** 4 August 1912

**Place of birth:** Lidingö, Stockholm

**Education:** Architecture degree from the University of Michigan, 1935

**Arrival in Budapest:** July 1944

**Disappearance:** January 1945

**Date of death claimed by Russia:** 17 July 1947

## FILMS ABOUT RAOUL WALLENBERG (A SELECTION)

2012

*Raoul Wallenbergs krig* ('Raoul Wallenberg's War'), director Gregor Nowinski. Documentary.

2006

*Raoul Wallenberg, L'Ange de Budapest* (*Raoul Wallenberg: the Angel of Budapest*), director Marcel Collet. Documentary.

2005

*Der Fall Raoul Wallenberg* ('The Wallenberg Case'), director Klaus Dixel. Documentary.

2004

*Dead Men's Secrets – Whatever Happened to Raoul Wallenberg?* The History Channel. Documentary.

2001

*Searching for Raoul Wallenberg*, director Robert L. Kimmel. Documentary.

1994

*Wallenberg, Autopsie d'une disparition* ('Wallenberg, Autopsy of a Disappearance'), director Jean-Charles Deniau. Documentary.



PHOTO: ANDERS ENGMANNTI

Stellan Skarsgård (left) as Raoul Wallenberg in the movie *Good Evening, Mr. Wallenberg*.

1990

*God afton, Herr Wallenberg* (*Good Evening, Mr. Wallenberg*), director Kjell Grede. Biopic.

1985

*Wallenberg: A Hero's Story*, director Lamont Johnson. Biopic.

## TRACES OF WALLENBERG AROUND THE WORLD

Memorials and monuments to Raoul Wallenberg have been erected in many countries. Here are a few of them.



PHOTO: JACK MIKRU/TT



PHOTO: TIMOTHY A. CLARY/TT



PHOTO: SZILARD KOSZTICSÁK/TT

Clockwise from left: A briefcase in bronze by Ulla and Gustav Kraitz marks Wallenberg's birthplace in Stockholm; Raoul Wallenberg's sister, Nina Lagergren, visits her brother's monument in Budapest; 'Hope', also by Ulla and Gustav Kraitz, is New York's tribute to Raoul Wallenberg. The diabase columns are mined from Swedish bedrock.

## PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

Wallenberg affected countless lives during his time in Budapest. Here are two of many testimonies:

### JONI MOSER

'I was Wallenberg's errand boy. Since I spoke German as well as Hungarian, I could pass through barriers and was therefore well equipped to be a messenger.'

Moser tells of the day that Wallenberg learned about 800 Jewish labourers being marched to Mauthausen. He drove with Wallenberg to the march. Wallenberg asked that those with Swedish passports raise their hands.

'On his order, I ran between the ranks and told the men to raise their hands, whether they had a passport or not. He then claimed custody of all who had raised their hands, and such was his bearing that none of the Hungarian guards opposed him. The extraordinary thing was the absolutely convincing power of his behaviour.'

### TIBOR AND AGNES VANDOR

Tibor and his wife Agnes were employees of Wallenberg. Agnes was about to have a baby. All hospitals were barred to Jews and houses were overcrowded. Wallenberg found a doctor and took the Vandors to his flat on Ostrom Street.

There, he gave young Agnes his bed and went into the hallway to sleep. In the early morning, the doctor announced the arrival of Yvonne Maria Eva. The Vandors asked Wallenberg to be her godfather, and he graciously accepted.

Read more testimonies about Raoul Wallenberg: [raoulwallenberg.org](http://raoulwallenberg.org)

## IN WALLENBERG'S FOOTSTEPS

Many other heroes have fought in the same way as Raoul Wallenberg, on the side of the weak, against oppression, violence and persecution. Four of them are Hédi Fried, Emerich Roth, Stieg Larsson and Ingrid Segerstedt-Wiberg.



PHOTO: SANNA SJÖSWÄRD



PHOTO: JAN COLLISSÖTT



PHOTO: ANDERS WIKLUND/TT

Left to right: Holocaust Survivors Hédi Fried and Emerich Roth, author Stieg Larsson and journalist, author and politician Ingrid Segerstedt-Wiberg.

### Bearing witness to Nazi atrocities

Holocaust survivors Hédi Fried and Emerich Roth were awarded the 2015 Swedish Raoul Wallenberg Prize for their efforts to reach young people with their story – seen as crucial to future education about racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The two have overcome the pain and trauma of their terrible experiences to engage in a lifelong effort to get the truth across and to promote both tolerance and compassion. Together they founded the Association of Holocaust Survivors in Sweden.

The prize has been awarded twice before. In 2013 it went to Siavosh Derakhti, founder of the organisation Young Muslims Against Anti-Semitism (today Young People Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia). He was honoured for “setting an example to Malmö and Sweden through his own private initiative and his voluntary efforts to combat xenophobia. He is an example to others through his activities and has shown that the determination of a single individual to reject growing intolerance can make an impact.”

In 2014 the Raoul Wallenberg Prize

was awarded to Emir Selimi, a young Romani, for his work to raise awareness among young people in Sweden about xenophobia and equal rights. He is founder of the organisation Young Romani.

### Gave a voice to anti-fascism

The journalist and author Stieg Larsson (1954–2004) is best known for his *Millennium* trilogy. He is also known for his strong commitment to democracy and anti-fascism.

In the mid-1980s, Larsson was involved in setting up the Stop Racism project. In 1988, he and Anna-Lena Lodenius, a fellow journalist and author, started one of Sweden's largest ever mappings of organised racism. The result was the book *Extremhögern* ('The far right'), published in 1991.

Larsson was also one of the founders of the Expo Foundation (*Stiftelsen Expo*) and *Expo* magazine. The foundation maps, monitors and provides information about extreme right-wing and racist tendencies in society. The magazine's objective is to defend democracy and the freedom of expression and fight racist, anti-Semitic and totalitarian tendencies in society. In 1999, Larsson became editor in chief, a position he held until his death. He died of a heart attack on 9 November 2004.

### Pioneer for human rights

The journalist, author and politician Ingrid Segerstedt-Wiberg (1911–2010) devoted her life to fighting for human rights, freedom, peace and democracy. As the daughter of newspaper editor and Nazi opponent Torgny Segerstedt, she was involved early on in refugee work and in opposing Nazism. Her engagement in international issues resulted in assignments with the UN, the Nordic Council and Unicef. ■

## USEFUL LINKS

- [levandehistoria.se](http://levandehistoria.se) Forum for Living History
- [raoulwallenberg.net](http://raoulwallenberg.net) The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation
- [raoulwallenberg.org](http://raoulwallenberg.org) The Raoul Wallenberg Committee of the United States
- [raoulwallenberg.se](http://raoulwallenberg.se) Raoul Wallenberg Academy
- [raoul-wallenberg.eu](http://raoul-wallenberg.eu) Searching for Raoul Wallenberg
- [rwi.lu.se](http://rwi.lu.se) Raoul Wallenberg Institute
- [skma.se](http://skma.se) The Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism
- [wallenbergdatabase.ud.se](http://wallenbergdatabase.ud.se) Searchable database of testimonies and documents concerning Raoul Wallenberg

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Further information about Sweden: sweden.se, the Swedish embassy or consulate in your country, or the Swedish Institute, Box 7434, SE-103 91 Stockholm, Sweden. Phone: +46 8 453 78 00; e-mail: si@si.se www.si.se www.swedenbookshop.com www.swedenabroad.com

