
The Raoul Wallenberg Research Initiative RWI-70

++ December 10th is International Human Rights Day ++ Two publications raise important new questions about Sweden's extreme passivity in the official handling of the Raoul Wallenberg case ++ Russian authorities express readiness for in-person discussions regarding unanswered questions in the Wallenberg investigation

4-2020

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!



Dear Friends and colleagues,

after a difficult year that continues to cast its shadows and threatens to hold us in its grip much longer than many of us had hoped, there is still much to be grateful for. Obviously, all of us are looking forward to living our 'normal' lives once again to the fullest. In the meantime, we let the spirit of resilience and perseverance carry us through. It also means taking on our pending research projects with renewed vigor and determination. So, without further ado, let us delve right in.

Last we spoke, the Swedish Foreign Minister Anne Linde had intervened personally to ask her Russian counterpart, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, to provide a full and meaningful response to the list of requests for information and access to documentation submitted by Raoul Wallenberg's immediate family - his nieces Marie Dupuy and Louise von Dardel - more than a year ago (October 2019). Since then, in spite of two strongly worded reminders, which were delivered to Russian authorities via the Swedish Embassy in Moscow, no meaningful response has been received.

However, there have been flickers of a constructive exchange. The Russian authorities apparently did express a willingness to conduct a new round of discussions in person, in Moscow, with Raoul Wallenberg's immediate family and researchers, about the important unsolved questions in the Raoul Wallenberg case. In response, Marie Dupuy and Louise von Dardel expressed their gratitude and sincere appreciation for the offer. At the same time, they addressed personal letters to half a dozen Russian archives, indicating that in order to ensure that the proposed discussions would be productive, they would have to be sure to meet with the top level Russian archive official. Additionally, they provided a list of specific questions for each archive that should be the subject of in-depth discussions at the planned meetings. The list includes several additional questions that have arisen since the requests were originally filed. The global public health crisis has so far prevented any travel to Moscow, but as soon as conditions allow, the planned meeting will be at the top of the agenda.

There have also been other interesting new developments regarding continuing research in Sweden.

In two separate new studies, researchers call into question several long held assumptions in the Raoul Wallenberg investigation. These include details about Wallenberg's selection for the humanitarian mission in Budapest; his contacts and activities in Hungary; and the factors that influenced the official Swedish handling of Wallenberg's disappearance after 1945.

The combined findings suggest that the Swedish government's extreme passivity in the Raoul Wallenberg case may have been the result of several additional, previously not fully recognized or acknowledged factors. 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. It in many ways appears to have been a conscious decision by Swedish decision makers, driven by a variety of motives.

Specifically, the new insights lead to a potential reevaluation of the actions of the much criticized Swedish Envoy to Moscow Staffan Söderblom and other Swedish decision makers, 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 long career.

You will find a detailed synopsis of the findings of the two studies at the end of this circular. The new insights, as well as the new questions that arise from these studies should give strong impetus for in-depth discussions and follow-up inquiries. We plan to release additional information pertaining to this research in late December and early January.

The two publications are:

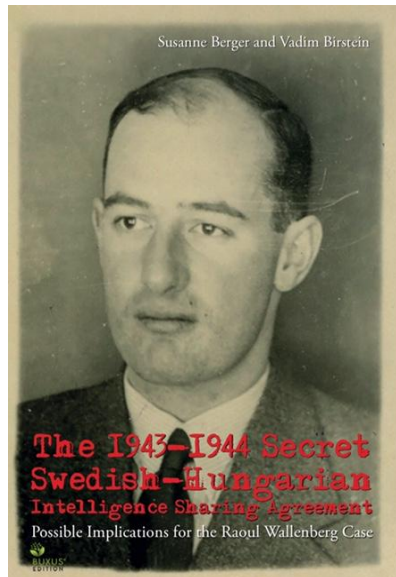


Photo: Buxus Edition

Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein. *The 1943-1944 Secret Swedish-Hungarian intelligence agreement: Possible Implications for the Raoul Wallenberg case.* Bochum: Buxus Edition, 2020.

Newly obtained documentation from the archive of the Swedish military intelligence service (MUST) suggests that several previously unknown factors may have influenced the Swedish government's passive approach to Wallenberg's disappearance. In particular, there are some indications that Swedish intelligence operations in Hungary may have compromised Raoul Wallenberg in the eyes of Swedish officials. Earlier official investigations found no direct 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 information reveals that Swedish wartime intelligence operations in Hungary began much earlier and were more extensive than previously known. These operations, carried out in close cooperation with American and Hungarian intelligence agencies as well as British representatives, 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.

The early Swedish-American intelligence interests and activities in Hungary in 1943 – almost a full year before Wallenberg's diplomatic appointment in July 1944 – 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. 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.

This paper will be available as an e-publication on the Buxus Edition website:

<https://www.rwi-70.de/publications/books/>



Photo: Peter Axelsson

Peter Axelsson. *Raoul Wallenberg: Kan en miljardkredit förklara Söderbloms mötet med Stalin?* [Raoul Wallenberg: Can a billion dollar credit and trade agreement explain Söderblom's meeting with Stalin?]. Bochum: Buxus Edition, 2021 (research paper, upcoming publication)

In a six months period - from December 1945 until June 1946 - the Swedish Envoy to Moscow Staffan Söderblom formally asked Soviet officials at least three times to confirm that Wallenberg was no longer alive, including during his fateful personal meeting with Stalin, shortly before leaving his post. Prior to each of these requests Söderblom consulted directly with his superiors (the Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén and others) as well as the former Soviet Ambassador Alexandra Kollontay, who by then had returned to Moscow but who was still on the staff of the Soviet Foreign Ministry. Only in 1951 did the Swedish government finally officially demand Raoul Wallenberg's release.

The failure to make a strong representation on behalf of Raoul Wallenberg during the decisive year 1946 is all the more remarkable because, precisely at this time, Stalin and the Soviet leadership had sent strong signals they were ready to reduce political tensions with Sweden. Additionally, on at least two occasions Swedish officials - and Söderblom personally - had received relatively strong indications (including from a high-ranking Soviet Foreign Ministry official) that Wallenberg was alive and imprisoned in the Soviet Union. A new analysis by the Swedish historian Peter Axelsson suggests that 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 need to solve Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance.

Axelsson 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. Therefore, it appears that Staffan Söderblom's much criticized behavior can be partially explained in the context of these official Swedish priorities. Söderblom's actions also in many ways represented the norm rather than the exception to the Swedish Foreign Ministry's position in the Wallenberg case.

Peter Axelsson gave a talk about his research findings for Swedish members of Parliament earlier this year. Mr. Axelsson's paper is available on request. It will also be available in the upcoming collection of research papers on the Raoul Wallenberg case from Buxus Edition which will be released early next year.

Other News



December 10th is International Human Rights Day



Depicted from left to right: Imprisoned Swedish publisher Gui Minhai; Uighur prisoners in a concentration camp; Swedish Eritrean author Dawit Isaak; a small child separated from her parents in US immigration custody; Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Soutoudeh; American journalist James W. Foley.

The recent elections in the United States are the clearest indication yet that while democracy may be resilient, it also finds itself increasingly under siege. What stands out most of all is not that we apparently have managed to hold strict autocracy at bay for the moment, but how narrow the margin of escape truly was and continues to be. When the President of the United States directly and openly demands to overturn a democratic election in his own country, then all of us should worry what such a brazen challenge portends for the rest of the world. Those most directly in the line of fire are journalists who are tasked to provide the facts and information the public needs to assess major policy decisions; as well as courageous public officials and jurists who - despite serious efforts at intimidation - dare to stand up and defend the rule of law. On this special day, I urge everyone to support whatever cause is close to your heart and to give generously. Lives literally depend on it.

Dawit Isaak - Crimes against humanity case filed in Sweden against Eritrea's leadership

On October 21, 2020 *Reporters Without Borders* filed [a formal complaint with Sweden's Prosecutor General's Office](#), alleging Crimes against Humanity committed by members of the government of Eritrea against Dawit Isaak, a Swedish-Eritrean journalist who has been imprisoned in Eritrea without charge or trial for over 19 years now. He is the only journalist and EU citizen who has been adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

The complaint names Isaias Afwerki, Eritrea's President since 1993, as well as his foreign, justice and information ministers and four other senior administrative and security officials.

The complaint was filed with Sweden's Prosecutor General by Swedish attorneys **Jesús Alcalá** and **Percy Bratt**, with support from human rights advocates, as well as 10 international jurists. They include: 2003 Nobel peace laureate **Shirin Ebadi**; former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights **Navi Pillay**; former African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights chair **Pansy Tlakula**; Canada's former Minister of Justice **Irwin Cotler**; **Bernhard Docke**, a lawyer and member of the German Federal Bar Association's human rights committee; international human rights lawyer and Barrister **David Matas**; Eritrean Law Society director **Daniel Mekonnen**; **Philippe Sands**, a British and French lawyer who is president of English PEN; Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa executive director **Gaye Sowe**; Straniak Academy for Democracy and Human Rights director **Hannes Tretter**; and University of Pretoria Centre for Human Rights director **Frans Viljoen**.

You will find the full text of the complaint [here](#)

In addition, the Swedish chapter of Reporters Without Borders (RUG) has issued an investigative report about the official Swedish handling of the Dawit Isaak's unlawful imprisonment and the failure of silent diplomacy to bring about his release:

[Prisoner of Conscience since 2001 - why has Sweden not managed to bring Dawit Isaak home?](#)

The Swedish Parliament also just announced that it will conduct a [formal inquiry](#) in the case, beginning in January.

The European Union (EU) adopts a global human rights sanctions regime

On December 7, in a historic decision, the European Union adopted a new EU-wide, global human rights sanctions regime for serious human rights violations. The first names of human rights violators who are to be included in the new sanctions list have already been selected. The listed persons now face severe travel and financial restrictions, including visa bans and the freezing of their personal assets. The new sanctions regime will allow the EU to punish serious human rights violations quickly and directly. A major focus for the initial listings are perpetrators who commit crimes and sexual violence against women. Some serious problems with the new legislation still persist, however. For example, it does not include provisions to sanction individuals who engage in large scale corruption. Also, any listing decision currently requires unanimity rather than a majority decision. This will make it very difficult for the 27 EU members states to find a consensus in many cases.

For a discussion about the complex deliberations leading up to the new legislation, please read my [interview with Dr. Clara Portela](#), leading international sanctions expert, Institute for Security Studies of the European Union (EUISS), in the [Fritz Bauer Blog](#).

Release of a Landmark Report on Media Freedom



High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom
Photo: The Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights

This past November 16th, a [High-Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom](#) released a major report on consular support to journalists at risk, focusing on the need to strengthen protections for press freedom around the world. This important report, authored by Professor Irwin Cotler and endorsed by the [Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights \(RWCHR\)](#) and the [International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute \(IBAHRI\)](#), has been reviewed and revised by the world's leading lawyers, human rights experts, and press freedom organizations. The Report outlines the rights and obligations of States in the provision of consular assistance and diplomatic protection, which includes the rights owed to nationals by their Home state (where the journalist normally resides), their Host state (where the journalist is reporting), and the rights of individuals that exist independently under international law. A copy of the report is available on the [RWCHR's website](#).

In another important development, Professor Cotler has been named [Canada's special envoy](#) for Holocaust remembrance and the fight against anti-Semitism.

Freedom of Information: German court denies access to records of the Federal Security Council (BSR)

In Germany, Dr. Gabriele Weber continues her efforts to obtain access to official German government records from the archive of the Federal Security Council (Bundessicherheitsrat, BSR), the German Chancellery and other agencies. The most recent court decisions concerned the request to release records pertaining to the supply of weapons and armaments to the dictatorships of Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay during the years 1972 until 1985. Journalists and jurists from other countries are closely watching these cases to see what lessons they can learn for similar projects regarding the public's right to information, meaning the accessing of public records in their own jurisdictions. Read the original article in [German](#) and in [English](#)

Wishing all of you a healthy and content holiday season, and just a little bit of Mozart - Susanne

[LVHF 2017: W. A. Mozart - Laudate Dominum, KV 339 - Patricia Janečková - Sopran - YouTube](#)

Synopsis

Susanne Berger and Vadim Birstein. *The 1943-1944 Secret Swedish-Hungarian Intelligence Agreement: Possible Implications for the Raoul Wallenberg case*. Bochum: Buxus Edition, 2020.

Peter Axelsson. *Raoul Wallenberg: Kan en miljardkredit förklara Söderbloms mötet med Stalin?* [*Raoul Wallenberg: Can a billion dollar credit and trade agreement explain Söderblom's meeting with Stalin?*]. Buxus Edition, 2021 (upcoming publication)

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 four years, we compiled two separate catalogues of pending questions which we presented to Swedish and Russian archives and government agencies. 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.

Below we present a few preliminary findings of this project. Some of the new information we have collected over the past two years 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 Wallenberg's disappearance in 1945, as well as in later years.

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. 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 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.

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.

1. **Newly obtained documentation from the archive of the Swedish military intelligence service (MUST) suggests that several previously unknown or not fully acknowledged factors may have influenced the Swedish government's passive approach to Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance.**
2. **In particular, there are indications that Swedish intelligence operations in Hungary may have compromised Raoul Wallenberg in the eyes of Swedish officials.**
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. **These operations, carried out in close cooperation with American and Hungarian intelligence agencies as well as British representatives, 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.**
6. **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.**
7. 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.
8. Already in October 1943, Sweden and Hungary agreed on a joint intelligence sharing agreement regarding the Soviet Union. Proposals for such an agreement had been presented to the Swedish Defense Staff by a chief officer of the Hungarian General Staff as early as April 1943. [Maj. General István Ujszászi, head of the Hungarian State Security Center (Államvédelmi Központ)]
9. Shortly after, Swedish counter intelligence prepared a detailed report about Soviet espionage operations in Sweden which it delivered to Hungarian intelligence and military counterintelligence. (The report has not been located in either Swedish or Hungarian archives). In return, Maj. General István Ujszászi provided a detailed report on the Communist underground in Hungary to the Swedish intelligence.
10. The agreement is an indication that Sweden was ready to expand and intensify its own monitoring of the Soviet Union, from the traditional sphere of Finland and the Baltic States to Eastern and Central Europe. The various joint intelligence operations of 1943-1945 had the following aims:
 - a. To obtain intelligence about Nazi forces, including German troop strengths and movements (order of battle), logistics and supplies.
 - b. To assess the strength of the Hungarian resistance; to prepare for a possible occupation of Hungary by Western military forces; and to prevent or limit a Soviet occupation of Hungary
 - c. To collect and relay (with the help of the Hungarian resistance) specific information to Western Allied forces abroad, in order for to conduct active sabotage operations, on land and by air; i.e. bombing of railway lines, troop convoys, etc.
 - d. To obtain basic information on the movements of the advancing Red Army and to prepare for the expected Soviet occupation of Hungary. These preparations included, among other things, the creation of various reporting structures through certain entities and individuals on the ground in Hungary, i.e. the OSS Budapest City Unit, a.o.

11. These operations involved individuals with whom Raoul Wallenberg was directly acquainted, such as the special agent of the Swedish Defense Staff Thorsten Akrell; Lt. Col. Carl Bonde, head of the Swedish Counterintelligence (stepson of Ebba Bonde, sister of the bankers Marcus and Jacob Wallenberg); Helmuth Ternberg, Deputy head of the Swedish C-Bureau; Dr. Antal Ullein-Reviczky, the Hungarian Minister in Stockholm; Andor Gellért, a Hungarian journalist attached to the Hungarian Legation who reported to the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS); as well as OSS representatives Robert Taylor Cole and Iver Olsen.
12. Already in November 1943 Taylor Cole made arrangements to send codes and technical equipment with the help of Swedish subjects to Hungary.
13. It has also newly emerged that the Swedish Defense Staff (Lt. Col. Bonde) planned to send special agent Thorsten Akrell to Hungary as early as January 1944; the trip had to be postponed for several months, due to the occupation of Hungary in March 1944.
14. Also in January 1944, the Anglo-American Allies demanded that Hungarian officials should agree to promote covert sabotage operations against the Germans, in order to demonstrate the Hungarian government's sincerity to leave the war. The message was transmitted to the Hungarian Foreign Minister Jenő Ghyczy by the Hungarian Minister in Stockholm, Antal Ullein-Reviczky, via a trusted courier.
15. At least five or possibly more Swedish signal intelligence officers were stationed in Hungary during 1943-1945. The work of these men has never been formally acknowledged by the Swedish government. No records about their deployment or communications have been preserved in Swedish archives
16. The deployment of these Swedish officers lends added credence to previously reported claims that members of the Hungarian resistance relayed key information about potential bombing targets to Allied forces located in Bari (Italy) and Malta via a transmitter located in or adjacent to the Swedish Legation. (This information was first outlined by the Swedish historian Gellert Kovacs in 2013).
17. In September 1944 Thorsten Akrell transferred two additional wireless transmitters to Hungary. During his stay in Budapest he met with Raoul Wallenberg.
18. OSS archival materials shows how in October 1944 information obtained from sources in Hungary regarding supply trains and troop movements was transferred via wireless transmitters to OSS headquarters in Bari and Caserta (Italy). From there, the details were shared with the British Air Force.
19. Additionally, it is known that on two occasions in late October 1944, Per Anger forwarded communications on behalf of the MFM, intended for Soviet representatives, presumably via the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm. These communications have not been located in Swedish or Russian archives until now.
20. The presence of Swedish signal intelligence officers in Budapest suggests that the members of the Swedish Legation, including Raoul Wallenberg, apparently had available to them an additional channel of secret communications with Stockholm.
21. There are some indications that the operations outlined above already involved certain preparations for post-war cooperation, such the creation of certain reporting structures (OSS Budapest City Unit) and mechanisms of intelligence collection (including through the subsidiaries of Swedish companies located in Eastern and Central Europe, as outlined by Taylor Cole.) It is not known if Raoul Wallenberg's plans for a large private organization dedicated to the reconstruction of Hungary was in any way part of these plans.
22. It is currently unclear what knowledge Soviet officials had about these activities and if they in any way influenced Stalin's decision to order Wallenberg's detention in January 1945. Stalin most likely intended to use Raoul Wallenberg as a way to pressure the Swedish government in some form.
23. On the Swedish side, it must be clarified what role, if any, Raoul Wallenberg and his diplomatic colleagues at the Swedish Legation in Budapest had in these various intelligence activities. They include, among others: [The former Swedish Ambassador] Per Anger; [the Swedish diplomat] Lars Berg and [the former Swedish Minister in Hungary] Ivan Danielsson.

24. Additionally, it must be examined in greater detail if the Swedish government's possible concerns about the public disclosure of its extensive neutrality violations (i.e. Swedish wartime intelligence aims and operations) may have affected the official Swedish handling of Wallenberg's case immediately after his disappearance in January 1945, as well as in later years.
25. In particular, it must be established what knowledge the Swedish Foreign Ministry and other government officials had of these operations, including Staffan Söderblom, the Swedish Envoy to Moscow in 1945-46, as well as other high level diplomats like [the former State Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1938-1945 and Ambassador to the United Kingdom and the United States] Erik Boheman; [the former head of the political department of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1944] Erik von Post, the Foreign Minister Östen Undén and 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. Åström was directly involved in the Wallenberg investigation for decades and has been suspected of having served as an asset of Soviet intelligence throughout his long career.
26. It is unclear what the powerful Swedish bankers Jacob and Marcus Wallenberg (Raoul Wallenberg's cousins once removed) knew about Swedish-Allied wartime operations in Hungary. Both men maintained close connections to Swedish military and intelligence representatives during and after the war. Helmuth Ternberg (former deputy head of the C-Bureau) cooperated with Jacob Wallenberg in several efforts to seek clarification of Raoul Wallenberg's fate. Ternberg's brother, Admiral Egon Ternberg, was Raoul Wallenberg's godfather.
- 27. The foregoing may help to clarify why the Swedish government did not take advantage of several important opportunities to learn the truth about Raoul Wallenberg's 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.**
28. It is known that as early as the spring of 1946, Stalin signaled a wish to reduce tensions with Sweden. However, it has been overlooked that by the end of 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 the end of the year, 'favorable conditions' would be created between Sweden and the Soviet Union. (The Politburo issued a precise set of instructions how the Soviet Ambassador in Stockholm, Iliya Chernishev was to brief the Swedish government).
29. Already by the end of May 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 Ambassador Söderblom and Stalin a few weeks later, on June 15, 1946.
30. 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 Söderblom's actions, are problematic.
31. Also, according to his own notes, 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.
32. 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 (who had by then returned to Moscow), so he was certainly keenly aware of the issue.
33. 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 received several strong indications (including from a high-ranking Soviet Foreign Ministry official) that Raoul Wallenberg was alive and imprisoned in the Soviet Union.
34. It should be noted that even when, in October 1946, Sweden and the Soviet Union signed a \$300 million credit and trade pact 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.

35. Even more importantly, in a six months period - from December 1945 until June 1946 - Staffan Söderblom formally asked Soviet officials at least three times to confirm that Wallenberg was no longer alive, including during his fateful personal meeting with Stalin, shortly before leaving his post. Prior to each of these requests Söderblom consulted directly with his superiors [Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén] as well as Alexandra Kollontay who still formally remained on the staff of the Soviet Foreign Ministry.
36. **A new analysis by the Swedish historian Peter Axelsson suggests that 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 need to solve Raoul Wallenberg's disappearance.**
37. **Axelsson 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.**
38. **It appears that Staffan Söderblom's much criticized behavior can be partially explained in the context of these official Swedish priorities. Furthermore, Söderblom's actions in many ways represented the norm rather than the exception to the Swedish Foreign Ministry's position in the case.**
39. In fact, there is growing evidence that - contrary to how it is generally portrayed - Swedish and Soviet representatives felt comfortable enough to discuss and coordinate a number of highly sensitive issues. 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; or secretly arranging the recall of Staffan Söderblom from Moscow in the spring of 1946, in which the two sides agreed to make it appear that the request had come from the Soviet leadership. Meanwhile, they did not raise the question of Raoul Wallenberg's fate in these discussions.
40. Instead, Swedish diplomats repeatedly stressed in public communications that Raoul Wallenberg was "most likely dead" (Gunnar Gerring, March 1946), or that they felt "sure he is dead" (July 1946), and that even if he were alive, he could not be saved. (US Department of State, September 1945). Only in 1951 did the Swedish government finally officially demand Raoul Wallenberg's return.
41. 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) She also referred to the official handling of her son's case as "cold blooded".
42. **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 was still alive.**
43. 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.
44. 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.
45. Marcus Wallenberg, in particular, was interested in expanding business contacts with the Soviet Union. 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.
46. 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.

47. 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.
48. 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 Alexandra Kollontay in Moscow. The letter has not been located in either Swedish or Russian archives and its content is not known. Marcus Wallenberg had also sent an earlier message to Kollontay in April 1945.
49. Alexandra Kollontay's response from June 7, 1946 implies that Marcus Wallenberg had asked her for assistance in clarifying Raoul Wallenberg's fate. He had also apparently mentioned the subject of future Swedish-Soviet relations.
50. **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 Sverker Åström.**
51. **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.**
52. 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).
53. There are indications that both Swedish and Russian officials intentionally kept the focus of the Wallenberg investigation very narrow, misrepresented or 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.
54. Finally, the new findings strongly suggest that additional records remain to be discovered in various international archives, including Russia, Hungary, the United States, Great Britain and Sweden.