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1. Forwarded herewith are two additional issues of Yecke Journalen containing two articles on Subject.
2. These articles are forwarded to Headquarters for information.

[Handwritten signature]

● 22 August 1956

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THE MYSTERY OF A WAR HERO

BY JOSEPH L. LICHTEN

Reprinted from the *ADI Bulletin*

TWELVE years ago, a 32-year-old business man departed from his native Sweden on a wartime mission. On July 9, 1941, he arrived in Nazi-controlled Budapest. He bore credentials as an attaché of the Swedish embassy. But diplomacy was not his business.

His name was Raoul Wallenberg.

His task was incredible and gigantic, as brazen as it was courageous. He had been selected to rescue as many of Hungary's hapless Jews (there were 300,000 in Budapest alone) as his ingenuity and his immunity as the citizen of a neutral nation could manage.

Raoul Wallenberg had come in haste. The free world was aware that for several months the Nazi movement in Hungary had been planning systematic genocide, the same inhuman plan of forced deportations and mass liquidations that had destroyed the Jewish community of Poland. The horrors and tortures that had befallen Jews in the ghettos of Warsaw, Lodz and Cracow were now to descend on Hungary.

Each week the list of deportees ran into the hundreds. Many of the victims never reached the concentration camps they were marked for; they died of hunger or dysentery, or frantically killed themselves, on the way. Appeals to Admiral Horthy, the Hungarian regent, that he force a halt to the butchery had little effect. The pleas of the Pope, of Sweden's King Gustaf and other neutral leaders, were spurned. A warning from President Franklin D. Roosevelt was

ignored. Mass round-ups were routine incidents in Hungary on the day Raoul Wallenberg arrived there.

Wallenberg was a Christian gentleman, scion of a distinguished Swedish family. His father was a well-known banker; his grandfather had been an ambassador to Turkey and Japan. Raoul had studied architecture in the United States. But he returned to Sweden after his schooling to establish himself successfully in the export-import field.

He knew little about Jews, less about Jewish affairs. Before the war he had visited Palestine, more as a tourist however, than as an observer of political or social developments. The rescue of Hungary's Jews had been planned by Swedish and American authorities in Stockholm. Wallenberg had been asked to lead the undertaking; he accepted promptly. He was a bachelor and—to repeat a Christian in the finest tradition.

Raoul Wallenberg proved his mettle at once. To combat the mass deportations he began rescue operations on an equally wholesale, and completely unheard of, scale. He started by recruiting an embassy staff. But what a staff! It swelled to 600 persons and their families, most of whom were Jews who, for various reasons, had been accorded priority status in his rescue plan. The priority non-Jews whom Wallenberg similarly gathered into his fold were leaders of Hungary's anti-Nazi underground.

As members of a legation, the new

"Swedish officials" found immediate safety in their diplomatic status. The success of this happy band prompted Wallenberg to play it to the hilt. With in weeks he was issuing Swedish passports to anybody and everybody who could, in the remotest way, show some prior contact with Sweden. These passports saved hundreds more. . .

But thousands were being deported. So Wallenberg next challenged the Nazi tormentors by designing a "protective passport" which he had printed in Sweden's colors and which bore the embassy's seal and signature. This document bluntly affirmed that its holder was under the protection of the King of Sweden—a broad hint to Hungarian officials that a passport owner was not to be molested in any way!

Hungarian Nazis, frustrated and angry, nonetheless respected the hint. They were fearful to do otherwise. By that time, the war was going badly for Hitler and Wallenberg had a disturbing habit of reminding them of a day of reckoning.

The protective passport trick was used widely. Soon the Swedish Red Cross in Budapest began distributing them, as did the embassies of several neutral nations and the Papal Nuncio. Finally, several underground groups went to work circulating forged copies. Within weeks the number of protective passports mounted to tens of thousands.

The Nazis tried hard to invalidate the forgeries. The Gestapo visited Wallenberg regularly, bringing him obvious forgeries to examine. Wallenberg studied them carefully. But his answer was always the same. "They're authentic," he insisted.

Wallenberg carried his rescue opera

tions inside the councils of the enemy. He planted agents with both the Hungarian police and the Gestapo. In that way he sometimes got his hands on a copy of the daily list of Jews placed under arrest. Promptly, Wallenberg prepared protective passports for them, personally bringing the documents to deportation headquarters. There he forced the authorities to give up a large part, if not all, of the imprisoned group.

Wallenberg acted with utter fearlessness in his confrontations with the Nazis. His personal heroism was reflected in the persistent ways in which he harassed their rule. But always he maintained the correct, dignified demeanor of the diplomat. Nazi transport commanders, assigned to deliver truckloads of Jews to nearby concentration camps, often were dismayed to find that Wallenberg had attached himself to their motor caravans. He rode in a Red Cross truck which bore food, medicine and clothing for the Jewish victims. With Swiss legation workers and Roman Catholic nuns to assist him on these mercy errands, Wallenberg became a common sight on the dusty roads leading out of Budapest.

The Nazis were afraid to harm him in public. But they marked him for murder and Wallenberg found himself in all sorts of freak accidents. He was threatened, shot at, run down by army tanks and trucks. He always escaped—to persist with his urgent mission.

When Hungary's pro-Nazi Szalasi government, eager to facilitate the mass deportations, tried thwarting Wallenberg and the underground by ordering a 10-day blockade of Jews, Wallenberg quietly fought back by organizing a Jewish commando group. The commandos successfully infiltrated the



RAOUL WALLENBERG.

Sketch made by artist for this page.

blackout to bring food and supplies to the embattled Jewish families. Later, with the assistance of the Swedish Red Cross and underground Zionist groups, Wallenberg established several children's centers which he insisted were Red Cross operations protected by Sweden's international immunity. In that way he saved at least 8,000 children from certain death.

Again, when Budapest Jews were ordered to enter a newly created ghetto, Wallenberg popped up with 32 large houses which he tented and placed un-

der Swedish immunity. He filled the houses with thousands of Jews. Other neutral embassies followed his example, creating among themselves an international ghetto, probably the only one in history.

By December, six months after Wallenberg's arrival in the city, Russian troops had begun their siege of Budapest. In frenzied retaliation, the Arrow Cross movement, Hungary's Nazi gang, planned a mass murder of the remaining Jews. Wallenberg learned of it and

quickly intervened by reminding the Wehrmacht chief, General Schmidhuber, of the death penalty that would befall a German commander who allowed a pogrom of this sort. The general understood perfectly; he ordered his troops to prevent any possible massacre.

On January 13, 1945, four days before Soviet troops were to seize full control of Budapest, Wallenberg decided to seek out their military chiefs for assistance in rescuing Jews still trapped in the ghettos. He was referred to a Major Demchenko and, to his surprise, was placed under guard. Wallenberg reappeared at his office four days later, in the wake of the liberating troops. Three Russian soldiers accompanied him. "I am going to see Marshal Malinovsky [the Soviet commander]," Wallenberg informed his co-workers. He added, somewhat tactfully, "I don't know whether I am going as a prisoner or as a guest."

Raoul Wallenberg left the office, the three armed soldiers with him. He has not been heard of since. . . .

If Wallenberg is still alive he is probably unaware that the thousands of families he rescued and protected, in their gratitude, built a monument in his honor; that a pavilion of Budapest's Jewish Central Hospital is now called

Wallenberg Building; that a busy avenue similarly bears his name. Nor is it likely that Wallenberg knows of the petition signed by 1,500,000 Swedish citizens demanding an explanation of his fate, or that Sweden's Prime Minister, on a recent visit to the Kremlin, kept posing an embarrassing question to his Soviet hosts: "What happened to Raoul Wallenberg?"

The Communists are uncommunicative about it. Shortly after Wallenberg's sudden disappearance, Russian officials reported that he was "under the protection of the Russian Army." Since then, however, they refuse to acknowledge that they ever heard of him.

In 1946, a report filtered through the Iron Curtain that Wallenberg was in a Ukrainian prison camp. Later, he was reported a prisoner in the most dreaded MVD camp in Moscow. And last year, several German prisoners of war, returning from Russia, recalled a "Raoul Willborg, a Swedish Red Cross officer," as an internee at a camp in Lavshed in Central Asia. "This Willborg," they said, "was a tuberculosis case."

Some of these rumors has been corroborated. To all inquiries, the Soviets shrug and say nothing. Thus, the fate of Raoul Wallenberg, one of war's noblest heroes, is yet to be answered for.

Dr. Joseph L. Lichten was prior to World War II in the diplomatic service of the Polish Government, but escaped to Sweden when the Soviet Union occupied Eastern Poland. From 1941 to 1943 he was attached to the Embassy of the Polish Government-in-Exile in Washington as consultant on Eastern European affairs and nationality problems. Since 1943 he has been director of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.