

Raoul with his grandfather Gustav



Raoul with his mother Maj



Wallenberg in his late teens



RAOUL WALLENBERG

TEXT: LAUREN DYER AMAZEEN PHOTOS: FROM NINA LÄGERGREN'S PRIVATE COLLECTION

Born into a family with a long tradition of foreign affairs and philanthropy, educated as an architect in the US, Raoul Wallenberg used his creative acumen – innovative problem solving and lateral thinking – to save the lives of tens of thousands of people during the Nazi occupation in Budapest during his assignment from 1944 to 1945. His unwavering drive was fuelled by a deep sense of compassion and his principles of humanitarianism. 2012 marks the 100th anniversary of his birth and will be celebrated by people who share his values and wish to keep them alive all over the world. It also serves as a reminder that the fate of this courageous man is still unknown. He was detained by the Soviet army entering Budapest in 1945, and despite an international outcry for the release of documents from the Soviet government; his actual fate is still unknown. Many believe that this year's celebrations could serve as an impetus for the demonstration of international goodwill through disclosure of the truth concerning Raoul Wallenberg's mysterious disappearance.

Wallenberg in his office in Budapest 1944



The world remembers 2012: Raoul Wallenberg Centennial “One man can make a difference.”

TEXT: OLLE WÄSTBERG

Co-ordinator for the Government of Sweden for the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial

No one is as strong – for good or evil, as a man with a goal and conviction.

This is written in the aftermath of the monstrous terrorist murder in Norway. The murder, planned and executed with evil conviction ended or changed the lives of hundreds of people.

“One man can make a difference.” That is the sentence written over the front door of the Raoul Wallenberg School in Brooklyn, New York – one of many schools honouring Raoul Wallenberg, a man that showed that good conviction could save lives in the thousands. Raoul Wallenberg was the young Swede sent to Budapest in the end of WWII in order to use passports from neutral Sweden to protect Jews threatened with immediate deportation to the death camps.

He was a young man from a wealthy family, ready to risk his life for human beings he never had met or had any relation to. He and his collaborators saved tens of thousands of Jews. That has made Raoul Wallenberg – who on the 4th of August next year should have been 100 years old – become a symbol

of unselfishness and courage.

Gideon Hausner, the Israeli attorneys general, who headed the prosecutors at the war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem fifty years ago and later was the president of Yad Vashem, the foremost museum and monument of the Holocaust, has written about Raoul Wallenberg:

“Here is a man who had the choice of remaining in secure, neutral Sweden when Nazism was ruling Europe. Instead, he left this haven and went to what was then one of the most perilous places in Europe, Hungary. And for what? To save Jews. He won his battle and I feel that in this age when there is so little to believe in – so very little on which our young people can pin their hopes and ideals – he is a person to show to the world, which knows so little about him. That is why I believe the story of Raoul Wallenberg should be told and his figure, in all its true proportions, projected into human minds.”

Raoul Wallenberg risked his life in the struggle against one of the horrifying ideologies of the dark twentieth century; Nazism. He was killed by the other; Communism.

In January 1945 Raoul Wallenberg sought out the Soviet commander in order to create a safe situation for the Jews of Budapest in the mayhem of the Russian occupation. He was captured by the Soviets, brought to Labjanka Prison in Moscow. He never returned to his home country. When and how he died is still not fully proved. Swedish official negligence contributed to so his case was not raised immediately. At the centennial of Raoul Wallenberg's birth next year he will be remembered all over the world: By exhibitions, lectures, books and manifestations. Numerous places, streets and schools have been named after him. There are 32 monuments in different countries remembering him.

To honour Raoul Wallenberg is not only to honour a great man but also to remember that the responsibility and power in every one of us could be used for good or evil, that one man can make a difference.

The memory of Raoul Wallenberg is personal, but his fate also makes him a symbol of our time.