

Soviet double agent may have betrayed Wallenberg

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STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - A Soviet double agent may have betrayed the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from Nazi death camps in World War Two, a researcher said Monday.

Swedish author Wilhelm Agrell said his study of secret service correspondence in Swedish and Soviet archives led him to believe Wallenberg, who was arrested by Soviet secret police in Hungary in January 1945, was turned in by friend Vilmos Bohm.

Agrell said in an article in Swedish daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter the archives show Bohm was a Soviet double agent codenamed Orestes, who may have told the Soviets of Wallenberg's activities.

A Swedish government report in March says Wallenberg and Bohm both worked undercover for Britain and the United States, with Bohm acting as a middle-man in Stockholm.

"If Bohm reported to his Soviet employers what he reported to his superiors in the British delegation, Raoul Wallenberg was betrayed and the fate he met no longer appears a mystery..." Agrell wrote in the newspaper.

Russia has said Wallenberg was taken to Moscow's notorious Lubyanka prison where he died in 1947 and acknowledged the diplomat was held by the Soviets for political reasons.

Wallenberg helped thousands of Hungarian Jews escape transport to and near certain death in Nazi Germany's concentration camps by issuing them Swedish passports.

A Hungarian, Bohm spent the war years in Sweden posing as a Social Democrat and political refugee. He was later Hungary's ambassador to Sweden after the war.

Wallenberg's fate has been an unsolved mystery and critics have said Sweden has made little effort to find out the truth -- possibly because of Wallenberg's close ties with Washington.

Sweden was neutral in World War Two and walked a diplomatic tightrope between the superpowers during the Cold War. It has refused to declare Wallenberg legally dead without proof.

"Information on Bohm's role as a Soviet agent does not solve all the puzzles around Wallenberg, but they open another dark dimension in an intelligence game which the drama of the young diplomat Raoul Wallenberg clearly was a part of," Agrell said.

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