

## A NOTE ON KUTUZOV-TOLSTOY'S LETTER OF AUTHORISATION<sup>1</sup>

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In her recently published mammoth work<sup>2</sup> of nearly 800 pages on Raoul Wallenberg, Ingrid Carlberg has a note referring to the important question of Michael Kutuzov-Tolstoy's letter of authorisation, said to have been issued by the Swedish Minister in Budapest, Ivan Danielsson and giving Kutusov-Tolstoy the right to engage in discussions with the Russians on behalf of the Swedish Legation. In this note she writes :

Philipp [*Rudolph Philipp*] also claims that Ivan Danielsson at the same time had given the Russian interpreter in the Protecting Power Section , Tolstoj-Kutusov , a written letter of authorisation to negotiate with the Red Army on behalf of the Swedish Legation. However no such document has been found. If this was indeed the case, it can have contributed to queering the pitch for Raoul Wallenberg.<sup>3</sup>

Now it is worthwhile to begin by pointing out that Philipp was not the only person to make this claim. There was in fact a much better positioned witness to this letter of authorisation, namely Lars Berg, Wallenberg's colleague at the Legation. In his memoir *Vad hände i Budapest?*<sup>4</sup> , Berg comments on it quite explicitly:

Immediately after Pest had fallen into Russian hands, in accordance with his assignment , he [ M.K-T] had called upon the Russian commander of the city, General Tjernysov. There he had identified himself as the Swedish legation's representative and requested protection for the Swedish mission building on Gyopar-utca as well as for the Swedish diplomats and their living quarters.

Already long before the Russians had surrounded Budapest, Minister Danielsson after consultation with Anger, Wallenberg and me , had given Tolstoj this assignment and in addition supplied him with a letter of authorisation . The reason for this was practical , namely it was expected that Tolstoj in his hospital at the edge of the city would be the first of us who would come in contact with the Red Army.

However, there is in fact no need to rely on the witness of such secondary sources. As was made clear in the present author's *Excerpts from McKay's Notes*<sup>5</sup> , I possess

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1 © Craig Graham .McKay. Date of composition 28 May, 2012.

2 Ingrid Carlberg, *Det står ett rum här och väntar på dig...* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2012).

3 Note 1054, page 734 of Carlberg, op.cit. The present writer's translation.

4 Lars Berg, *Vad hände i Budapest?* (Stockholm:Forsners Förlag, 1949). As a curiosity , I may mention that I happen to possess one of the rare first editions of this work – the book mysteriously disappeared from the bookshops in Sweden-and indeed one signed by Lars Berg himself.

5 This was formally presented and distributed at a UD Research Seminar on Raoul Wallenberg held in Stockholm on 28 January 2011. It is now available on the present website.

photocopies of the original documents given to Kutuzov-Tolstoy. I had been generously given these copies by Dr. Michael Hagemeister , a distinguished German Slavist and a former pupil at Kutuzov-Tolstoy's school in Ireland. There was no particular cloak-and-dagger mystery about the acquisition of these papers When Kutuzov-Tolstoy died, there had been an auction of his effects and Michael Hagemeister had been able to purchase them.<sup>6</sup>

With Michael Hagemeister's permission, I have reproduced in the appendix Kutuzov-Tolstoy's letter of authorisation in Russian and German versions. These were issued at the beginning of November 1944 and duly signed by Minister Danielsson.

The most important part of this letter is the second paragraph which empowers Kutuzov-Tolstoy "*to make the first contact with the Russian military authorities on behalf of the Legation while the Legation itself is unable to do so due to the [German] occupation of right bank of the Danube*".

Ingrid Carlberg remarks that such an authorisation "can have helped to complicate the situation for Wallenberg." The latter's decision to seek contact with the Russians on his own initiative must have appeared to contradict the letter of authorisation already presented to Kutuzov-Tolstoy by Danielsson and approved by, among others, Raoul Wallenberg.<sup>7</sup> It should, however, be added that according to Per Anger, Wallenberg did at least beforehand clear this decision with the Swedish Minister.<sup>8</sup> Danielsson then gave his approval, for Wallenberg to proceed *if the circumstances on the spot (as judged by Wallenberg) warranted it*.<sup>9</sup>

For what transpired in the case of Kutuzov-Tolstoy, when he contacted the Russians, there is the account given in his own memoir and the version which appears in Lars Berg's book which in turn relied on a conversation with Kutuzov -Tolstoy. The main point stressed by Kutuzov-Tolstoy in these accounts is that because his name did not appear in the official list of Swedish Legation personnel which had been handed over to the Russians<sup>10</sup>, this aroused suspicion and he was held for intensive questioning under several days.<sup>11</sup>

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6 In this, he displayed much more enterprise and initiative than the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

7 Quite apart from this, my own personal feeling is that there was something worryingly unrealistic about a junior civilian member of the Swedish Legation requesting to be taken to Malinovskii , a Soviet general in the field. The attitude of most military men of senior rank would undoubtedly have been: "Who the Devil does this young puppy think he is!". This seems a rather obvious point but for some reason it is seldom made.

8 SOU 2003:18, p.181.

9 A key psychological question, however, is whether in giving his tacit approval, Danielsson regarded Wallenberg's decision in effect as a *fait accompli*. In other words, Danielsson may not have actually approved of Wallenberg's decision to seek independent contact with the Russians but merely went along with it. If this is the case, then it would perhaps explain Söderblom's statement that Wallenberg "on his own initiative had sneaked across to the Russians" which was plausibly derived from Danielsson's private view of the matter. See SOU 2003:18, p. 287.

10 For the list of personnel handed to the Russians , see the discussion in SOU 2003:18, pp 176-177.

11 In his memoir *Rapport du Comte Koutouzov-Tolstoy sur ses demarches etc. dans l'affaire de la disparition de Raoul*

History has not been kind to Kutuzov-Tolstoy. Soon identified as a possible Soviet agent by OSS and other sources after the war, and rendering himself suspicious first by his postwar service with the Soviet occupants in Hungary and subsequently by his later, dubious interventions in the case of Raoul Wallenberg, Kutuzov-Tolstoy was assigned, not surprisingly, the mantle of Judas. His reputation sunk still lower when Sudoplatov identified him as a long term Soviet asset recruited much earlier and an important source of information about the Swedish Legation and its activities in Budapest.<sup>12</sup> Yet until the present Russian government is prepared to release further information about Kutuzov-Tolstoy which they undoubtedly hold, much about the man remains pure speculation.<sup>13</sup>

On one particular issue, however, there can be no doubt whatsoever. It was he and no-one else who was given the official task of making the first contact on behalf of the Swedish Legation in Budapest with the Red Army.

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*Wallenberg*, Collon, County Louth and dated 10 March 1955, (generously provided by Dr. Hagemeister ) Kutuzov-Tolstoy asserts (i) that he was taken by the Russians on January 10, 1944 to Malinovskii's HQ, then at a distance of some 20 kilometres from Pest (ii) he was held there for intensive interrogation for 8 days and (iii) that the burden of the interrogation was to find out about the the members of the Swedish legation and their activities. He further asserts that the HQ did not possess any list of the personnel of the Swedish Legation. Finally he claims that the Russians showed no particular suspicion towards the Swedes – including Wallenberg- at the Legation. Rather their suspicion was directed at Hungarians employed by the Legation or by Langlet at the Red Cross.

12 It never ceases to startle me that while many of Sudoplatov's statements about atomic espionage are treated with measured scepticism, a similar scepticism is not displayed with regard to his assertions about people like Kutuzov-Tolstoy. There can be little doubt, however, (see the previous note) that the Russians must have received detailed information about the Swedish Legation from Kutuzov-Tolstoy in the period immediately after January 10 and the question is naturally whether this information and its interpretation by the Russians queered the pitch for Wallenberg.

13 A summary of some of the main facts of Kutuzov-Tolstoy's life will be found in the present author's *Excerpts from McKay's Notes*

## Documentary Appendix

These documents are reproduced with the permission of Dr. Michael Hagemeister who holds the originals in his private archive.

ШВЕДСКОЕ КОРОЛЕВСКОЕ ПОСОЛЬСТВО  
ЗАЩИТНИК ИНТЕРЕСОВ  
СССР  
В ВЕНГРИИ

Будапешт. 1ое ноября 1944

(48.)

### П О Л Н О М О Ч И Е.

Шведская королевская миссия, защитница интересов Советских граждан в Венгрии, сим удостоверяет, что: Михаил Павлович ГОЛЕНИЦЕВ КУТУЗОВ ТОЛСТОЙ, начальник отдела для русских военнопленных, действует, как уполномоченный Шведской Королевской Миссии во всех делах, относящихся к советским военнопленным и гражданским ссыльным, чьи интересы защищаются Швецией.

Кроме того, сим удостоверяется, что Михаил Павлович ГОЛЕНИЦЕВ КУТУЗОВ ТОЛСТОЙ уполномочен шведской Королевской миссией установить, для миссии, первый контакт с русскими военными властями и поддерживать эту связь до тех пор пока миссия не будет сама в положении установить связь занятием правого берега Дуная.



*Samuelson*

шведский Посланник.

*Копия передана  
Генеральному  
консулу  
в Венгрии  
11.11.44*

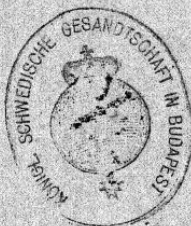
(46)

V o l l m a c h t

Die Königlich Schwedische Gesandtschaft, betraut mit der Vertretung sowjetrussischer Interessen in Ungarn, bestätigt hiermit, dass Herr Michael Kutusow Tolstoj, Chef der Abteilung für russische Kriegsgefangene, als Bevollmächtigter der Königlich Schwedischen Gesandtschaft in sämtlichen Angelegenheiten, welche sich auf sowjetrussische Kriegsgefangene und Zivildeportierte beziehen für welche Schweden als Schutzmacht fungiert, zu amtieren hat.

Weiterhin wird bestätigt, dass Herr Michael Kutusow Tolstoj die Vollmacht hat, namens der Königlich Schwedischen Gesandtschaft gegebenenfalls den ersten Kontakt mit den russischen Militärbehörden für die Gesandtschaft aufzunehmen und dies solange, bis durch die Besetzung des rechten Donauufers die Gesandtschaft nicht selbst die Verbindung aufnehmen kann.

Budapest, den 4. November 1944 .



*Michael Kutusow*

Kgl. Schwedischer Gesandter