

Brief bios

Agnes Mandl Adachi

She was born in 1918, Budapest in Hungary. As a teenager, she attended Budapest's prestigious Baar Madas private school, run by the Hungarian Protestant Church. Although she was the only Jewish student there, Agnes' parents believed that the superior education at the school was important for their daughter. Agnes' father, a textile importer, encouraged his daughter to think for herself.

Agnes then studied teaching techniques with famous Italian educator Maria Montessori in Italy. She was in Switzerland in 1939 to study French. She returned to Budapest in 1940. After the Germans occupied Hungary in 1944, Agnes was given refuge in the Swedish embassy. She then began to work for Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg in his efforts to save the Jews of Budapest, including the distribution of protective passes (Schutz-Pass). When the Soviets entered Budapest, Agnes decided to go to Romania. After the war, she went to Sweden and Australia before moving to the U.S. She married to Mazazumi Adachi.

She published a book about Wallenberg:

Adachi, Agnes, *Child of the winds: my mission with Raoul Wallenberg*. Chicago 1989.

Ernest Bokor

He was born in August 1920, in Debrad' (Czechoslovakia, Hungarian name of the village: Debrőd; before June 1920 part of Hungary) in an observant Jewish family. In his childhood, he lived with his family in another town Dubovec (Dobóca) in Czechoslovakia. He lost his father in 1932.

Ernest went to Budapest after high school to work and help his family. He was a member of the Shomer Hatzair Movement (cf.: Keywords for Teachers). With some other fellows, he entered the Hungarian Arrow Cross Movement as "fake member". He survived the Holocaust bearing an Arrow Cross uniform. He rescued a lot of Jews using his fake "identity" as a collaborator of Raoul Wallenberg.

At the end of January, he was captured with his brother in a protected house and they were taken to the concentration camp of Mauthausen and Gunskirchen, where he was liberated by the American troops.

He left for Israel in 1949, and immigrated to the United States in 1958. He worked as a jeweler there, till his retirement. He has two daughters.

THE WALLENBERG LESSON

Tom Lantos

Tom Lantos was born in 1928 in Budapest, Hungary and became a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He was first elected to Congress in November 1980, and was reelected repeatedly.

He was 16 years of age when Nazi Germany occupied Hungary. As a teenager, he was placed in a Hungarian fascist forced labor camp. He succeeded in escaping and was able to survive in a safe house in Budapest set up by Raoul Wallenberg. His story is one of the individual accounts which forms the basis of Steven Spielberg's Academy Award winning documentary about the Holocaust in Hungary, *The Last Days*.

In 1947 he was awarded an academic scholarship to study in the United States. Just a few weeks after he left Hungary, the communist party seized control of the country. Tom attended the University of Washington in Seattle, where he received a B.A. and M.A. in Economics. He moved to San Francisco in 1950 and began graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where he later received his Ph.D. in economics. In the fall of 1950 he started teaching economics at San Francisco State University.

In the summer of 1950, Tom Lantos married his childhood sweetheart, Annette Tillemann, also a Hungarian by birth. They have two daughters. Tom Lantos died in 2008. He was the only Holocaust survivor to have served in the United States Congress.

Nina Lagergren

Nina Lagergren Viveka Maria, born von Dardel on March 3, 1921, is the half-sister of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, and has long been a leading force in efforts to clarify Wallenberg's fate.

She was married to the judge and the Reich Marshal, Gunnar Lagergren from 1943 until his death in 2008, and has four children. The oldest daughter, Nane Annan, was married to Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General during the period 1997 - 2006.

Lagergren began to research her brother's story. With affection, she detailed what she had discovered, beginning with Wallenberg's birth after the tragically early death of his father.

"Nothing could stop him," Lagergren said, recalling Raoul's decision to go to Budapest in 1944 to try to save the Jews who had not yet been deported to death camps. He demanded a free hand with no diplomatic roadblocks, she said. The family knew of his dangerous mission but always expected that he would return.

Nina Lagergren's commitment to Raoul Wallenberg was the reason that she was awarded the Wallenberg Medal by the University of Michigan in 2000.