

## **Hillel Kook**

By Robert Rydberg - Sweden's Ambassador to Israel

It is a pleasure and honour to be here tonight for the Hillel Kook Memorial Evening.

Allow me first of all to pay my respects to the survivors of the Holocaust here present, to the family of Hillel Kook, the organizers and the distinguished speakers and invited guests.

The actions of Raoul Wallenberg are well-known and well-documented. Witnesses are still among us. Tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews were brought under the protection of the Swedish Legation and saved by Wallenberg and his collaborators. And plans to destroy the Budapest ghetto were prevented and with it the murder of perhaps 60 000 more.

Wallenberg achieved this through a combination of courage, determination and ingenuity, by never accepting that the seemingly impossible could not be done. His person was crucial. But his mission was not personal. It was the result of a unique initiative and cooperation between the Swedish and the US Governments and the World Jewish Congress and the War Refugee Board in the United States.

Hillel Kook, whom we honour tonight, had a key role in bringing about the organization which made this possible. The story of Hillel Kook, too, is a story of courage, determination and ingenuity, in the face of absolute evil.

The evil, the horror of the Holocaust must never be forgotten. It must never be repeated. To ensure this is the best honour we can bestow to Raoul Wallenberg, to Hillel Kook and to thousands of less known heroes.