

Interviewee: KEMÉNY-FUCHS, Baroness Elizabeth Date: November 15, 1986
Interviewer: Sara Callen

Audio tapes: 1 English Transcript: 1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions: None Libr. Catlg. #: D 810.J4 G7 no.72

SUMMARY

Baroness Elizabeth Kemény-Fuchs, the Austrian-born young wife of the Hungarian Foreign Minister Gábor Kemény, was shocked by the October 1944 persecutions of Jews under the Arrow Cross government. She thus, when approached by Wallenberg, was ready to help him, mainly by persuading her husband to help issue protective passports for Jews and also prevailing upon the German Ambassador Veessenmayer to issue needed visas, all at considerable risk to herself. She outlines how the stress of this, of the official duties, and of a difficult pregnancy caused her to go for a brief visit to her mother in South Tyrol, and how because of the baby's birth and the Soviet siege of Budapest she never could return there.

She critiques a film made about Wallenberg and her role, describing his actual activities, his special qualities, and his one misjudgment, being that of the Soviets' motivations. She mentions aid to Jews by Weiss diplomats and by Angelo Rotta, the papal nuncio. She asserts that her own involvement was solely humanitarian and that she neither is of Jewish descent nor ever was Wallenberg's mistress. She insists that her husband was not a Nazi, that indeed he helped save many Jews, and that the unjust idea of collective guilt led to his arrest, condemnation, and execution. She describes her own post-war struggles.

She feels more could have been done, especially by Swedes, to free Wallenberg, doubted that he was still alive, asserts that he should remain "a very bright example" in an ever more selfish world.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War, 1939-1945 - Rescue, Jews
World War, 1939-1945 Personal Narrative - Non Jew
Aid to Jews by many non-Jews - Hungary
Raoul Wallenberg
Holocaust Jewish (1939-1945) Hungary
Persecution of Jews by Arrow Cross - Hungary
Baroness Elizabeth Kemény-Fuchs
Protective passports for Hungarian Jews