

Accusations against Lajos Esztergár by Pécs Residents before the Post-World War II Verification Committee

Abstract

Lajos Esztergár has a dubious reputation for his role in World War II. He was mayor of the city of Pécs when about 6,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz. When considering the issue of his responsibility, it is common to discuss his trial in the People's Court, where the court acquitted him of the charges, even if he was morally condemned in the judgment. Historians have so far made little use of the proceedings of the Verification Committee, which also affected Esztergár after the World War in many cases. One reason for this is that we cannot speak about independent decisions in the case of Verification Committees. However, the documents that we have from the proceedings are important information and clues, if not full answers, for the investigation of the former mayor of Pécs. In this article, I examine Esztergár's responsibility in the light of the Verification Committee documents.

Keywords: Holocaust, Lajos Esztergár, People's Court, Verification Committee, World War II

Lajos Esztergár was the mayor of Pécs between 1940 and 1944. He led the city when German forces occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944. Three days after the occupation, the Sztójay government was formed. Several mayors resigned due to the anti-Jewish decrees issued by the regime, but Esztergár stayed in his position. He carried out all the orders depriving those considered Jews of their rights, leading to the enclosing of the Jews into a ghetto at the beginning of May, their transfer to the Lakits Barracks at the end of June, and finally their deportation to Auschwitz at the beginning of July. About 6000 people were deported from Pécs, 2811 of whom were Pécs residents. At the end of 1945, only 228 people returned to the city.

When Ferenc Szálasi began his rule of the country, at the end of October 1944, Esztergár was removed from his position and imprisoned in Nagykanizsa. He escaped there and came back to Pécs at the end of the year. After his return, he led the city again until June 1945.¹

The Provisional National Government created the Verification Committees (*igazolóbizottságok*) in early 1945.² The function of the Verification Committees was to investigate the role played by civil servants after September 1st, 1939, and determine for each one whether they had harmed the interests of the Hungarian people. Esztergár was brought before the Pécs Verification Committee, but we do not have information about the procedure or the final result. In the Historical Archives of State Security Services (*ÁBTL, Állambiztonsági*

¹ Vörös, I. K. (2020)

² 15/1945. Decree of the Provisional National Government on the verification of civil servants (Az Ideiglenes Nemzeti Kormány rendelete a közalkalmazottak igazolásáról). Ma;

Szolgalatok Történeti Levéltára) I only found the summons and letters written to the committee in his case, which I will present later.

The Verification Committees' members were delegated by the Provisional National Government's parties. Every party tried to put as many of their people in these positions as possible. However, the parties did not have enough experienced people in public administration at this time. To solve this problem, they hired a lot of people who had worked in public administration before 1945. These people usually joined the hiring party to avoid possible impeachment as Verification Committee members. Therefore, we cannot speak of independent decisions in the case of Verification Committees.³

For the above reason, it is not so much the verdict (which, in any case has not been found at the *ÁBTL*) that will interest us, but the accusations made by the Pécs residents and Esztergár's response to them. We will try to draw some conclusions based on these. These accusations are also important because they shed new light on some of the issues that were raised in later trials in the People's Court.

In this article, I will present the Verification Committee documents found in the *ÁBTL*. The accusations against the former mayor were basically made in three areas, to which Esztergár responded in a letter at a later stage of the proceedings. We do not know exactly when his letter reacting to the accusations was written, since it was not dated. One of the internal details reveals that a witness hearing was held in connection with the accusations, but the letter does not specify when that happened.

An overarching thread in Esztergár's reaction to the accusations is his claim of assistance to Jews. He includes a sentence in his discussion of nearly every specific topic showing his good relationship with Jews. For example, he wrote that there was trust between him and the Jews, or explained that he had no problems with the Jews, and even that Jews helped him get to his position. Besides that, he gives examples of the opposition he encountered when he tried to help Jews. He claims that he was considered a "Jewish hireling" ("*zsidóbérenc*") in the city for the help he claims to have provided the Jews in the ghetto (which I will present later). He claims that the Gendarmerie and the Gestapo objected to the mild measures he took when implementing the provisions related to the Jewish question. One example that he gives related to the issue of meat procurement, which I will cover in what he claims were his deliberate lies to the deporting authorities.⁴

Moving chronologically through the Verification Committee documents, we first find the shortest letter (from Dr. György Kasza), dated February 7th, 1945. In this letter, Kasza writes to the committee that Esztergár denounced him for hiding Jewish property in June of 1944, even though, Kasza claims, the mayor had promised impunity on May 24th to those who declared such acts.⁵ Esztergár's answer was similarly short. He denied the charge and said that he could

³ Gyarmati, Gy. (2011): 44.

⁴ *ÁBTL* 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

⁵ *ÁBTL* 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Letter of Dr. György Kasza to Ferenc Pál Leó, the chairman of Verification Committee No. II. (Dr. Kasza György levele Pál Leó Ferencnek, a II. sz. Igazoló Bizottság elnökének) February 7, 1945.

not find any document in the police records that would support the claim.⁶ In the absence of further information, no conclusions can be drawn about this matter. These claims can be scrutinized in later research by examining the police materials, if available.

Fortunately, there is more to talk about in the next two letters, where we can read about accusations that can also be seen in accusations made during Esztergár's trials before the People's Court. Both letters were signed by a group of people who accuse the former mayor of crimes against the people.

The following complaint was filed as a case of harm to Jews. In his letter of defense, Esztergár devoted the greatest effort to refuting these accusations. The signatories of the letter⁷ approached the People's Court on March 3rd, claiming that Lajos Esztergár and his circle in 1944 had committed a crime against the people by provisioning the Jews in an inhumane manner, and in some cases, aggravating the situation in various ways. Among the signatories of the document - as it turned out later - were Jews who had not been taken to Auschwitz because they were married to Christians.⁸ Esztergár, regarding this, mentions in his answer that "*...the denouncers had to thank me for not being dragged away from Pécs*" ("*...nekem köszönhatték éppen a feljelentők azt, hogy nem hurcolták el Pécsről*").

The former mayor later explains that at the conference in Siófok, it was decided that intermarried couples should also be deported. According to Esztergár, he was against this and approached László Endre to convince him of this. Endre supported this, but the Ministry and the Gendarmerie insisted on the original plan. However, the former mayor continued to stick to his idea, which was supported by Jenő Borbola, the head of the Pécs Police Department. According to the former mayor, it was thanks to this persistence that the intermarried couples were finally able to stay in Pécs. This is contradicted by a later statement of Esztergár's according to which the public administration "*did not have the right to act freely*" ("*szabad cselekvési joga nem volt*") after March 19th. He claimed that those who did not carry out the instructions exactly were threatened with retorts, and that former Chief Lieutenant Mihály Nikolits could confirm this to be true.⁹

From the denouncers' letter, there is information that we already know from the People's Court proceedings against Esztergár, mainly in the case of provisioning the deportees with food. For example, the following claims were made in the both forums: the food provided to the deportees in the Lakits Barrack was spoilt, because the guards stored the blood sausages (*véres hurka*) for 2-3 days in a warm place; Jews were not allowed to carry their food from the ghetto; etc. The denouncers also mentioned ill-treatment, like the body searches when moving to the Lakits Barracks, and the incredible overcrowding at the facility, etc.

⁶ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazolóbizottságnak írt levele)

⁷ Lajosné Andaházy, Lászlóné Kovács, Lajos Grün, Jánosné Kovács, Gyuláné Benczur, Rikárd Schléslinger, Rezső Szilas, Pál Kohn, László Polgár, Józsefné Ujj, Magdolna Ujj and Ágnes Glegedits

⁸ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Letter of Lajosné Andaházy and her companions to Ferenc Pál Leó, the chairman of Verification Committee No. II. (Andaházy Lajosné és társainak levele Pál Leó Ferencnek, a II. sz. Igazoló Bizottság elnökének). March 3, 1945.

⁹ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

What we did not know from the People's Court documents is that the intermarried who were not deported had to unpack the packages that were left in Pécs after the deportations. The accusers wrote that "...we were horrified to see that the packed sausage had turned green, that it was smelly and unpalatable." ("...borzadva láttuk, hogy a becsomagolt kolbász-féle megzöldült, büdös és élvezhetetlen volt.")¹⁰

We can learn some elements of the provisioning procedure from Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee that are not described in detail in the proceedings. Esztergár writes that the testimonies in the letter are contradictory. There were conflicting statements about when they received food, whether the bread was maggoty, or whether the deportees received food daily in the Lakits Barracks or not. After these comments, he responded to the accusations in a random manner, which I have ordered by topic and the chronological of the reported events.

First of all, regarding the food supply, he wrote that in addition to letting in fruit shipments, he also smuggled food illegally into the ghetto. He said: "*We had to smuggle the butter in for the sick and children. On my instructions, the butter was brought up to my office, from where it was handed over to one or another member of the Jewish council, usually to Sára Singer, by my secretary, Margit Velényi.*" ("A betegek és gyermekek részére úgy kellett becsempészniünk a vaját. Utasításomra a hivatalba hozták fel a vaját, ahonnan a zsidó tanács egyik, vagy másik tagjának, legtöbbször Singer Sárának, titkárnőm, Velényi Margit adta át.")

After the Jews were transferred to the Lakits Barracks, he writes that he had much less room for maneuvering in catering, because after the designation of the barracks, he could not get within 50 meters of the area. He claims that food was distributed inside by the Gestapo and protection outside was carried out by the Gendarmerie, so he had no chance to get inside.

Despite this, he tried to do everything he could to help, but he could only achieve results through lies, of which he gave examples. When he got the information that the Jews did not receive food for two days after being put in the barracks, he told Gendarmerie Colonel László Hajnácskőy to take action, because the public mood in the city was terrible as a result of this. According to Esztergár, Hajnácskőy acted only because of this lie, but it is hard to believe that Hajnácskőy would have believed Esztergár's claim without proof. In the other two cases, he was able to achieve his goal by referring to public supply difficulties. He claims to have cited difficulties in obtaining meat in order to supply the Jews with cooked food from the central kitchen. And at other times, in relation to the travel packages, he mentions that by citing difficulties, he was able to get canned goods and meat-products left in the ghetto to be included in the packages that the Jews were to be given for their journey.

In terms of food during the transportation, he talks about how he helped the Jews by convincing a Gestapo officer to give the Jews not just one, but two buckets of water per wagon. In addition, in principle, some pottage was to be also carried in a few wagons. Esztergár wanted to bring carrots, kohlrabi, sorrel, and rhubarb into the wagons at the station, but the gendarmerie district commander did not allow it. Nevertheless, the Gestapo officer in charge of the shipments later

¹⁰ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Letter of Lajosné Andaházy and her companions to Ferenc Pál Leó, the chairman of Verification Committee No. II. (Andaházy Lajosné és társainak levele Pál Leó Ferencnek, a II. sz. Igazoló Bizottság elnökének). March 3, 1945.

smuggled them into the wagons. In this regard, he also mentions two witnesses, undersecretary (*aljegyző*) Béla Garadnai and office manager (*irodaigazgató*) Ferenc Tóth.

Esztergár in many cases writes that he does not want to go into details. For example, he mentions that he saved a lot of Jewish property or he made suggestions to the Jewish Council that was not accepted, but in neither case does he describe exactly what these claims refer to. This is also the case when he writes that the Gestapo forced him to implement the decrees with threats. He does not say what the threats were.

He justifies his reticence in a later sentence: "I never brag about my actions, especially about the results I have achieved" ("Tetteimmel, főképpen pedig az elért eredményekkel sohasem szoktam hivalkozni"). This is somewhat contradicted by the lengthy quotes from and references to newspaper articles in an earlier part of the letter on which I will report later.¹¹

Besides, he claims to have helped many Jewish people though these are not mentioned in the People's Court documents. In one case, he mentions Dr. Albert László and his wife but not how he aided them. He does provide more information about the other cases.

He wrote about Zsigmond Deutsch, a steam brick-factory owner, and his family's fate. Esztergár claims he advised the family to leave the city in time. Unfortunately, he does not write a specific date. It would be worthwhile to know when he told them this, because then we would know when Esztergár knew what would be the fate of the Jews.

In the cases of Sándor Róth, the CEO of Pécs Tannery and the lawyer Ignác Balla, Esztergár, along with Mihály Nikolits (and his connections in Budapest), prevented them from being called up for labor service.

In addition, he helped a Jewish family from Slovakia who had fled to Pécs and were relatives of Dr. Hónigné and György Szirma (who worked under Esztergár). He arranged at the Ministry and the Control Committee for Foreigners for them to go to Palestine.

And finally, he wrote about four Jewish Pécs residents (Margit Klein, Zsuzsa Weltner, Edit Sebők, György Szirma) whom he employed, to prove that religious affiliation did not matter to him.¹²

Looking through the entire list, we see that among the beneficiaries there are people in leading economic positions (Zsigmond Deutsch and Sándor Róth); highly qualified people, presumably with a good financial background (Dr. László Albert and lawyer Ignác Balla); and people with some kind of relationship with Esztergár (Margit Klein, Zsuzsa Weltner, Edit Sebők, György Szirma and his relatives). This is interesting because the former mayor presents himself as the savior of Jewry in several places as I presented earlier, giving the impression that he wanted to help the entire local Jewry, although based on the names listed, we can rather conclude that he helped the richer families or those with whom he had some kind of relationship.

¹¹ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

¹² ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

Esztergár sometimes mentions interesting information about the ghetto. He wrote about how, given the circumstances, he was able to create such good conditions in Pécs that several people asked to be admitted there from other places as well. For this situation, as previously mentioned, he was considered a "*Jewish hireling*". To support this claim, he named Ferenc Halász, László Neumann, and his daughter as witnesses. We cannot know whether good conditions or some other reasons could have been behind these transfer requests.

Regarding the location of the ghetto, he claims that the Gestapo and the Gendarmerie wanted to locate the ghetto in the Rácváros Steam Brick Factory and in Deutsch's brick-drying floors, as was done with brick factories in other cities, and was the preferred method of Baky and Endre. Esztergár writes that he refused this order and that when the news reached them, they threatened him with internment, because his plans would have adversely affected Christians. This again contradicts the previously mentioned claim that Esztergár had no room to influence decisions after the German occupation.

He writes in several places about similar threats received from the Germans. After the German occupation, he claims to have often received only verbal instructions (asserting that Nikolits can support this fact). Because of this he tried to always have a witness at meetings. He gives an example of such a case. When he met with the Gestapo chief, Auringer, he insisted that the fire chief, Lajos Sik, be present as a translator. In reality, he had Sik there so that later Sik could testify on his behalf, if necessary, because the most serious punishments were placed in view if he should refuse these verbal instructions.¹³

In his answer to the accusation of crimes against the people made before the Verification Committee, Esztergár mentions many specific details that were not mentioned in his two People's Court trials held later, the first in December 1945, and the second in November, 1946.¹⁴ For example, he mentions a document issued by the Pécs Police Department, which states that he will be taken into police custody and interned after the Szálasi putsch. In addition, he wrote that he had this document in his possession, giving the number under which the document was filed and signed by Chief Police Advisor (*rendőr főtanácsnok*) Dr. Borsiczky. According to Esztergár, the justification for his internment given in the document states that he is "*anti-German and anti-National Socialist. In the past, he supported the Social Democrats excessively.*" ("*Német és nemzeti szocialista ellenes. A múltban a szociáldemokratákat túlzottan támogatta.*")

The former mayor based his defense against the accusation of crimes against the people on his achievements in the field of social policy. He argues that his work in that field proves that he worked for the interests of the people, so he could not be anti-people. To prove his point, he collected newspaper articles in which he was praised for the successes of his social policy efforts.

It is very interesting to see what Esztergár wanted to demonstrate with these articles. He mostly selected articles in which either the journalist or the newspaper that published the article was

¹³ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

¹⁴ Vörös, I. K. (2020)

not right-wing. By selecting these articles, he suggests that he was just as prominent in the eyes of the left-wing of the political spectrum as he was in eyes of the established regime, and thus, that he worked for the entire Hungarian people, not just for the supporters of the government.

For example, he mentions an article from 1933 in *Pesti Napló*, which was not considered right wing.¹⁵ But he does not point out that the same cannot be said for the author of the article. The article that appeared in *Pesti Napló* on August 30th was written by László Tápai-Szabó¹⁶, who was previously the editor-in-chief of the right-wing paper "*Új nemzedék*".¹⁷

At the same time, when mentioning an article written about him by a left-wing writer in a right-wing newspaper, Esztergár highlights the fact that it was written by a left-wing writer and not the orientation of the newspaper.¹⁸ A good example of this is his presentation of an article written by Lajos Gogolák that appeared in *Magyar Nemzet* on February 26th, 1939.¹⁹

From the same year Esztergár also presents an article published in *Kis Újság* on October 28th, where he highlights that the author of the article is one of the leaders of the National Peasant Party (*Nemzeti Paraszt Párt*). He probably highlights this to show that his work was recognized by a representative of another party.

We can read excerpts from this document from two more newspapers, the *Népszava* and the *Pester Lloyd*.²⁰ The first article of *Népszava* was published under the title "*Social Secretaries*" ("*Szociális titkárok*") on August 9, 1938.²¹ The second one appeared on March 2, 1940, under the title "*Let's Have a Social and Democratic Spirit*" ("*Szociális és demokratikus szellemet*").²² For these articles, the authors were not listed in the newspaper and Esztergár does not write about them. Interestingly, he doesn't talk here about their political orientation separately, even though *Népszava* was the central newspaper of the Social Democratic Party.²³ Only after the last article quoted in his list (from *Pester Lloyd*, which also praised the work of Esztergár) does he mention that the selected articles appeared in left-wing newspapers. In connection to this topic, it is important to talk about the fact that Esztergár's work on social policy was considered truly outstanding in these articles.

He concludes the presentation of his accomplishments with a detailed description of the National People and Family Protection Fund's (*ONCSA, Országos Nép- és Családvédelmi Alap*) data. He provided this information to show how much he did for the people, in order to refute

¹⁵ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

¹⁶ Social policy (Szociálpolitika). *Pesti Napló*, August 30, 1933. 8.

¹⁷ Kenyeres, Á. (1967): 821.

¹⁸ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

¹⁹ Lessons learned from the social policy session in Pécs (A pécsi szociálpolitikai értekezlet tanulságai). *Magyar Nemzet*, February 26, 1939. 11.

²⁰ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

²¹ Social Secretaries (Szociális titkárok). *Népszava*, August 9, 1938. 3.

²² Social and democratic spirit (Szociális és demokratikus szellemet). *Népszava*, March 2, 1940. 1-2.

²³ Révész, M. (1945): 4-6.

the charge of a crime against the people.²⁴ However, the fact that he had outstanding results in social policy did not absolve him from the charge of crime against the people. This kind of charge was determined by other criteria (explained in the article entitled “*Lajos Esztergár before the People’s Court*” by my research associate, George Deák, in this volume), and not based on who has done how much for the people in the past.

Finally, the third charge against him was related to the employment of auxiliary office officials (*segédhivatali tisztviselők*) in 1943. The signatories of the letter²⁵ approached the Verification Committee on April 1, 1945 claiming that Lajos Esztergár put four people from his “*own political party and personal circle*” („*saját politikai pártjának és személyi körének*”) into positions, instead of choosing professionally suitable people. The writers of the letter thought this was an act against the people, because it adversely affected many who were not promoted. The signatories wanted the Verification Committee to cancel the appointment of these persons. As it had to be pointed out in Esztergár's argument, so here too, the lack of promotion of certain people does not count as an act against the people. So, the real charge in this case was the illegal use of political patronage.

The first complaint in the letter was about Béla Adorján, who was appointed an office manager (*irodaigazgató*) by the former mayor. According to the letter, he was not productive at all in his work; rather he dealt with other matters. As an example, they cite a case when Adorján sold liquor to employees at a profit of seven percent. By appointing him, Esztergár hindered the advancement of other officials, causing financial damage to employees.

The second complaint was about the appointment of Iván Csellei, previously chief clerk (*főjegyző*), as office clerk (*irodatiszt*). Due to his age, he should not have held any position, so he was promoted illegally. The authors of the letter attribute Csellei's promotion to his wealthy financial background.

József Völgyes (Vasztl) was appointed office clerk (*irodatiszt*) by Esztergár. Völgyes was a retired financial officer and power station toll collector. According to the accusers, he too was a political supporter of the former mayor, and appointed beyond the legal age limit. In the letter, references are made several times to the fact that Esztergár carried out these promotions on a political basis.

Finally, the writers highlight Margit Velényi, who was appointed office assistant (*irodasegéd*) after only 3 years of employment, even though people with 15-20 years of experience were not promoted. It is also mentioned in connection with her, as with Adorján and Völgyes, that she was being rewarded for her political work.²⁶

Interestingly, when refuting these charges, unlike the previous ones, Esztergár does not comment on the cases of the specific persons mentioned. He starts with the fact that after 1943

²⁴ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

²⁵ Géza Wajdits, Rezső Cserkúti, Antal Ács, József Lázár, István Ragoncsa, Alajos Széles, Ferenc Neszmély, Henrik Pataki and Flórián Szentesi

²⁶ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Letter of Géza Wajdits and his companions to Ferenc Pál Leó, the chairman of Verification Committee No. II. (Wajdits Géza és társainak levele Pál Leó Ferencnek, a II. sz. Igazoló Bizottság elnökének) April 1, 1945.

he promoted about half of those making the complaint²⁷ and only those who were not suitable for some reason were not promoted. Among those, he lists by name someone who was convicted for negligence and thus, by law, that person could not have been promoted before 1948. Another person had a conflict of interests, etc. But he did not go into such details for the persons listed by the accusers. He claimed more generally several times that he always appointed people based on suitability.

In his rebuttal, Esztergár also writes that during the interrogation the complainants said that they did not want to file a complaint against the former mayor, but only wanted to cancel the promotions. In addition, Esztergár claims that some of the denunciators admitted that they did not know exactly what they were signing. In response to the patronage accusations, he wrote that he didn't care about politics once he attained the position of a city councilor (*városi tanácsnok*). He also talks about how it can be seen that he did not appoint people based on political interest, because there were people who were close to his political party and yet they were not promoted.

Looking at these three cases as a whole, it can be seen that there is a lot of confusion after the end of the World War II. People were looking for those responsible for the horrors they experienced. Some, like Kasza, simply wanted their possessions back so they could move on with their lives. Others lost their loved ones, like the Andaházys, and still others (Wajdits and companions) wanted to fill the positions that they did not have the opportunity to do before the end of the war. The people presented in my article named Esztergár as the source of their problem.

In his answer, Esztergár repeatedly points out that he considers it unfair that he is called guilty in these cases. In several places, he writes passionately about the accusations made against him: *"So, if someone has the right to complain, the complainant would only be me and I could complain to the Verification Committee about the ingratitude and malice of the people I saved."* („Ha tehát valakinek panaszra van joga, a panaszos csak én lehetnék és panaszkodhatnám az Igazoló Bizottság előtt az általam megmentett emberek hálátlanságát és rosszindulatát.”)²⁸

For the reasons described earlier, the Verification Committee procedure cannot provide us with an objective judgment of Esztergár, even if the full record could be found. Thus, these documents are much more suitable for describing Pécs after World War II. Compared to previous archival documents, we were able to learn more details from this period, which is an excellent basis for later research.

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²⁸ ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-14943/173. Dr. Lajos Esztergár's letter to the Verification Committee. (Dr. Esztergár Lajos Igazoló Bizottságnak írt levele)

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