

This is an electronic reprint of the original article. This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

---

## Tracing Szentes' Jewish Deportees

Pataricza, Dora

*Published in:*  
S:I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Method. DocumentiON

*DOI:*  
[10.23777/sn.0223/art\\_dpat01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0223/art_dpat01)

Published: 23/11/2023

*Document Version*  
Final published version

*Document License*  
CC BY-NC-ND

[Link to publication](#)

*Please cite the original version:*  
Pataricza, D. (2023). Tracing Szentes' Jewish Deportees: Insights from Unprocessed Records and Digital Methods. *S:I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Method. DocumentiON*, 10(2), 91-110.  
[https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0223/art\\_dpat01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0223/art_dpat01)

### General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

### Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Dóra Pataricza

# Tracing Szentes' Jewish Deportees

## Insights from Unprocessed Records and Digital Methods

### Abstract

Szentes, a small town situated near Szeged in the southern region of Hungary, had a Jewish population of approximately 500 people in 1941. In May 1944, the Jews of Szentes first had to move to a ghetto, and a couple of weeks later, they were taken to Szeged. From there, some were deported to Auschwitz, and others to Strasshof near Vienna. Several documents were written from April to June 1944, and a part of them are unpublished and unprocessed. These include records of the quantity and type of food that the Szentes Jews were allowed to take to the ghetto, and a detailed list of the Jewish population of Szentes, their family trees and origins. Additionally, administrative documents authored by local authorities emerged, outlining the methodical reallocation of formerly Jewish-owned apartments to non-Jewish residents of Szentes, undertaken according to the recipients' needs and preferences. By integrating underrepresented perspectives, the current study seeks to analyse the fates of the Jewish deportees of the Holocaust in Szentes. The fragmentation of the information and specific gaps can be filled in by processing partially newly discovered materials and utilising digital humanities technologies.

### The History of the Jewry of Szentes

The settlement of Jews in Szentes, a municipality situated in southern Hungary, can be traced back to the latter part of the eighteenth century; however, it was not until the onset of the nineteenth century that their communal presence became more pronounced. The establishment of a cohesive Jewish community in Szentes can be traced to a period predating 1817, as evidenced by the formulation of their initial statutes during that year. A contemporaneous census, conducted in tandem with the imposition of the toleration tax, divulged the existence of seventeen Jewish households comprising a total population of ninety-two individuals within the town. Occupationally, the majority of these inhabitants were engaged in trade, peddling, and various artisanal pursuits. Notably, in 1847, they inaugurated a tavern, expanding their repertoire of economic activities. Subsequently, during the 1850s, the Jewish community of Szentes further diversified its vocational endeavours, assuming roles encompassing ferry management, customs administration, fishing, hunting, military provisions, and even leech gathering. Significantly, in 1841, an elementary school was established through the initiative spearheaded by Vilmos Schlésinger, who acquired a property specifically designated for that purpose.<sup>1</sup>

A crucial moment for Szentes Jewry occurred with the adoption of the Act of 1867/17, granting them civil equality and marking the onset of their second historical phase. The so-called German/Yiddish phase concluded, giving way to the Hun-

1 László Harsányi, *A Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története: A magyarországi zsidó hitközségek monográfiái 3* [History of the Jewish Community of Szentes: Monographs of the Jewish Communities in Hungary 3], ed. Sándor Scheiber (Budapest: 1970), 13–25.

garianisation of the community, evidenced by the shift from keeping community minutes in German to using Hungarian. During this period, economic prosperity prevailed as the construction of a synagogue and a new school took place. Additionally, charitable organisations such as the Chevra Kadisha (1810) and the Women's Association (1866) thrived. Notably, the Jewish community of Szentes established the Malbis Arumim association (1864), an initiative providing clothing and firewood for low-income families.<sup>2</sup>

Szentes' synagogue, designed by Ignác Knábe, an architect from Buda, was built in the Romanticist style between 1868 and 1872 and was one of the largest synagogues in the region.<sup>3</sup> It was restored in 1901 and then again in 1910 when electricity was set up.<sup>4</sup> The synagogue was a regular place of religious service until 1944.

The outbreak of the First World War, in which twenty Jews from Szentes lost their lives, was a break in this development. The Jewish population of Szentes in 1920 was 754, when the town's total population was 32,387.<sup>5</sup> The decline of the Jewish community started mainly in 1938, with the acceptance and enforcement of the so-called anti-Jewish laws. In 1941, Szentes had 34,394 inhabitants, of which 510 were Jewish, or 1.5 per cent of the total population. The census of 1941 already indicated how many persons were regarded as Jews, that is, of Jewish descent.<sup>6</sup>

## Sources and Methodology

In an ongoing research project<sup>7</sup> that I have led within the Szeged Jewish Community, an international research group seeks to identify and reconstruct the names of approximately 10,600 Holocaust victims who were deported from or through Szeged, including the Jewish population of Szentes.<sup>8</sup> The project aims to uncover patterns, merge personal narratives with big data, and reconstruct the events that unfolded from April to June 1944. The primary objective is to trace the individual destinies of those deported from Szeged, which requires cross-referencing the ghettoisation and deportation lists from 1944 with all available sources to determine who survived the war and who perished in the Holocaust. However, conflicting information and discrepancies arise when comparing data and numbers from different sources.

Several questions can be raised regarding both the process of the ghettoisation and the reconstruction of the events. How were decisions made on the ghettoisation? How was ghettoisation prepared and conducted? What kind of information can we gain on everyday life in the Szentes ghetto based on the documents? How precise are

2 For a list of the statutes of the associations within the Szentes Jewish community, see Györgyi Barabás and Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, *Magyarországi Zsidó Hitközségek Egyletek Társulatok Alapszabályai 1705–2005* [Statutes of Jewish Communities Associations Societies in Hungary 1705–2005] (Budapest: MTA Judaisztikai Kutatóközpont, 2007), 553–556.

3 Rudolf Klein, *Synagogues in Hungary 1782–1918: Genealogy, Typology and Architectural Significance* (Budapest: Terc, 2017), 503.

4 "A volt zsinagóga története" [The History of the Former Synagogue], Szentes, accessed 25 September 2022, [https://www.szentes.hu/?page\\_id=996](https://www.szentes.hu/?page_id=996).

5 1920. Évi népszámlálás [Census of 1920], 185.

6 For a comprehensive description of Szentes' Jewry, see "Szentes", in *Pinkas Hakehillot Hungary: Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities, Hungary*, ed. Theodore Lavi, (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), 406.

7 I wish to thank the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany (Claims Conference, grant nr. 21880) and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (grant nr. 2021/952) for making the research project possible in the period from 2020 to 2022. I would like to express my gratitude to Mordechai Reismann (b. 1933 in Khust), who recounted his memories of the war period and the fate of his family.

8 Although some of the sources include male forced labourers, the scope of our research does not include collecting their names.

the testimonies? How can the fate of marginalised groups, such as the elderly people or the orphans of Szentes, be reconstructed?

This article is based on three primary archival sources. In 2018 and 2019, the Szeged Jewish Community conducted an extensive cataloguing and digitisation project,<sup>9</sup> which also included mapping Jewish-related materials from nearby towns. Subsequently, a significant portion of the remaining documents from the former Szentes Jewish Community was transferred and deposited in the Szeged Jewish Community Archives in 2019. These documents, serving as the first group of primary sources, consist of a detailed list of the Jewish population of Szentes, their family trees and origins. They also include requests written primarily in the 1950s and 1960s, which appeal to the Szentes Jewish Community leadership for statements regarding the fates of deportees, in order to seek compensation from the German state.

The second source is the documents found in the city hall of Szentes. The records compiled at the time of the ghettoisation, so from April to June 1944, have survived and remained in the city hall of Szentes. In the 1990s, Mayor Imre Szirbik discovered these in the confidential file handler safe in the archive of the president-in-office of the council. He handed over a copy of these to Dr Sándor Stern (the son of Dr Rudolf Stern, the former president of the Szentes Jewish Community) and to Yad Vashem.<sup>10</sup> I accessed the documents held by Sándor Stern. These documents, written by the local authorities, can be grouped into four categories:

1. a list of the apartments in Szentes of those who were regarded as Jews;<sup>11</sup>
2. a list and description of the houses of the would-be ghetto, including the wishes of its inhabitants for their future accommodation;<sup>12</sup>
3. a nine-page type-written list that includes all the residents of the ghetto (398 people), listing twenty-three houses and the distribution of families in each of these. According to Braham, the list of the Jews to be moved to the ghetto was compiled by the leaders of the local Jewish community and presented to the mayor's office by the community's president, Sándor Gunst, already on 7 April 1944.<sup>13</sup> Braham's dating can be refuted with the help of the death register of Szentes: according to this, Mrs Sámuel Plohn, née Izabella Pollák, died on 16 April 1944, and her death was registered on 17 April.<sup>14</sup> The ghettoisation list only includes the name of her husband, Sámuel Plohn. Thus, it must have been compiled after 16 or 17 of April.<sup>15</sup>

The document includes a handwritten note on the first page:

Comment. The streets marked with a line underneath were located in the areas of the 'Jewish ghetto,' which was fenced off. The Jewish residents were

9 Project leader: Vera Ábrahám, librarian of the Szeged Jewish Community; project manager: Dóra Pataricza.

10 Speech of Imre Szirbik at the Holocaust Memorial ceremony in June 2017, Szentes Info, accessed 7 September 2023, <https://www.szentesinfo.hu/mozaik/2017/5/holo.htm>. This information has been confirmed by Sándor Stern in a phone conversation on 20 September 2022.

11 Documents of the city, currently Stern collection, list no. 1.

12 Ibid. list no. 2.

13 Randolph L. Braham, *A népirtás politikája: A holocaust Magyarországon* [The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary] (Budapest: Belvárosi Kvk., 1997), 2:680. Braham refers to Harsányi, *A Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története* [History of the Jewish Community of Szentes], 121; however, Harsányi only states that "[o]n 7<sup>th</sup> April, a decree had been sent to Sándor Gunst, the president of the Jewish community, to submit four copies of the list of all the Jews and their addresses". Braham also states on the same page that the Jews from Szeghalom were taken to the ghetto of Szentes but, as the unknown editor of the Gunst interview has already pointed out, Szeghalom was in Békés County. Obviously, then, the Jews living in the nearby Szegvár village were the ones taken to the ghetto of Szentes as the Szegvár Jews belonged to the Szentes Jewish community. "Galla László", Centropa, accessed 22 September 2022, <https://www.centropa.org/hu/biography/galla-laszlo>.

14 Szentes death register 1943–1946, microfilm no. 005845939 entry no. 198.

15 Documents of the city, currently Stern collection, list no. 2, 4.

moved from the apartments indicated under the underlined streets into the ghetto. The comment is based on personal knowledge. Szentes, 28 Jan 1966 György Nagy,<sup>16</sup> the president of the executive board [“V. B. eln.” in Hungarian in an abbreviated form].

All members of the families were listed, their pre-ghetto addresses were included, and families were assigned one specific room within the house. The list has been transcribed, and thus it can be included that out of the 398 people, 234 were female and 148 were male. Sixteen people are of unknown gender, including the fifteen children of the orphanage who were taken care of by Mrs János Kellner (her maiden name is not included). The sixteenth person whose gender cannot be identified is listed as “Hoffmann képker. [Hoffmann picture framer]”, indicating the person’s occupation but not their first name. Women are only listed according to their married name (in the form of, for example, Pollacsek Mórné – Mrs Mór Pollacsek) and the year and place of birth are not indicated<sup>17</sup>;

4. the fourth batch of documents is a food list describing the types and quantities of foods which Jews were allowed to bring along into the ghetto of Szentes.<sup>18</sup> All of these records have been unpublished and unprocessed until now.

The third source used for the reconstruction of the deportation list are in the Csongrád County Archive. It contains multiple lists compiled in 1944, two of which have been used extensively for the reconstruction of the deportation list:

1. the first list records the heads of households who were required to relocate to the ghetto. It provides details such as their original addresses, the names of the family heads, the number of family members, as well as the assigned addresses and specific rooms within the ghetto. The list reveals that individuals were accommodated in various locations, including yards, entrance halls, kitchens, sheds, and granaries. In total, the list encompasses 398 individuals assigned to 222 family heads;<sup>19</sup>
2. the board of public guardianship (Hun. *Szentes Megyei Város Árvaszéke*) issued a decision on 17 July 1944 comprising a list of individuals who were deported. The list includes their names, ages (in years), family status (married, widow, unmarried), and pre-ghettoisation addresses. It consists of 317 adults and 79 minors, defined as individuals under the age of twenty-four at that time.<sup>20</sup> The total number of deportees was thus 396 people – 240 women and 156 men. The list does not include the names of men in forced labour or those who had been interned in April 1944. The discrepancy between the individuals relocated to the ghetto (398) and those ultimately deported (396) from Szentes amounts to two individuals, as two people died while still in the Szentes ghetto.<sup>21</sup> We have no information on who died later in the ghetto of Szeged, nor do we know if babies were born in the

16 György Nagy was elected the president of the executive board on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1963. *Csongrád Megyei Hírlap*, 7 March 1963, 1.

17 Documents of the city, currently Stern collection, list no. 3.

18 Ibid., list no. 4.

19 MNL CSMML Szentesi Levéltár, Szentes Város Polgármesteri Hivatalának iratai, 1256/1944.

20 MNL CSMML Szentesi Levéltára, Szentes Megyei Város Árvaszéke, 1738-26/1944.

21 Their names can be retrieved from the death register of Szentes. Mrs Lajos Toffler, née Irén Weiszner, aged forty-five (address in the ghetto: Vecseri utca 2/a), committed suicide (Harsányi, *A Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története*, 122) on 20 May 1944; however, in the death register of Szentes, the cause of death is indicated as cardiac asthma (Szentes death register 1943–1946, microfilm no. 005845939 entry no. 248). Mrs (widow) Hermann Schiller, née Róza Eisler, aged eighty-two, died of weakness due to old age on 27 May 1944 (entry nr. 259).

ghetto or on the train.<sup>22</sup> It might have been possible that young men who were forced to move into the ghetto were in the end sent to forced labour instead of deportation and that, just like in the case of Szeged, some people from Szentes managed to get an exemption from being deported.<sup>23</sup>

To create a comprehensive database detailing the fates of deportees from Szentes, the decision of the board of public guardianship from July 1944 had to be compared and merged with information from the Holocaust memorial of Szentes, and from Yad Vashem's and Arolsen Archive's webpages. Data were organised into separate columns and typographical errors were cleaned. The genders of the deportees were added manually, and the entire database was translated into English, including details on family relationships and on occupations. A significant challenge encountered was identifying married women, as Hungarian documents only recorded their married names without indicating their maiden names. In contrast, databases such as Yad Vashem included the combined maiden first names with the married family names. The website [macse.hu](http://macse.hu), offering digitised Hungarian vital records, was utilised to uncover the maiden names of married women, enabling the restoration of their identities.

The overlap between the deportation list and the list of victims is 192 out of 396 names. Starting from May 1947, the names of Jewish victims from Szentes were added to the death register of Szentes thus, almost half of the deportees perished in the Holocaust.<sup>24</sup> Further investigation and analysis are needed to reconstruct the fate of men in forced labour and of those who did not return, yet whose names have not been registered.

## The Process of Ghettoisation in Szentes

During the Holocaust, the number of Jews in forced labour and to be deported was altogether around 600.<sup>25</sup> By the time of the ghettoisation from 9 to 11 May 1944, the so-called "Jewish Council" had replaced the leadership of the community. Its members were: the chief rabbi, Dr József Berend; the president, Dr Imre Balázs (a lawyer); and Dr Jenő Bárdos, a medical doctor who had moved from nearby Szegvár to Szentes. Some men, especially the more prominent community members, were deported to Bácsstopolya (today Bačka Topola in Serbia) in April 1944. Some of the internees from the German-controlled camp were sent to Sárvár and then to Auschwitz, where they all perished, among them Sándor Gunst, the president of the community,<sup>26</sup> as well as Béla Lampel (the head of the Chevra Kadisha), Dr Andor Czukkermann (the former president of the community), Géza Kálmán (the former school board president), Dr István Wellisch (a lawyer), and Dr József Havas (a pharmacist). Another group of the Bácsstopolya internees were later transferred to the Szeged brick factory, where

22 At least one baby was born to two Jewish parents from Szentes during the deportation. Zsuzsa Hacsek was born in Vienna in September 1944 to Mrs and Mr József Hacsek. All of them, including Zsuzsa's older brother, László, survived the Holocaust. Zsuzsa Jávör's testimony, interview no. 50265, USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online.

23 Judit Molnár, "Mentesítési ügyek Szegeden" [Cases of Exemptions in Szeged], in *Csendörök, hivatalnokok, zsidók*, ed. Judit Molnár (Szeged: Szegedi Zsidó Hitközség Évkönyvei 1. 2000), 107–131.

24 Szentes death register 1946–1948, microfilm no. 005845940, from entry 302.

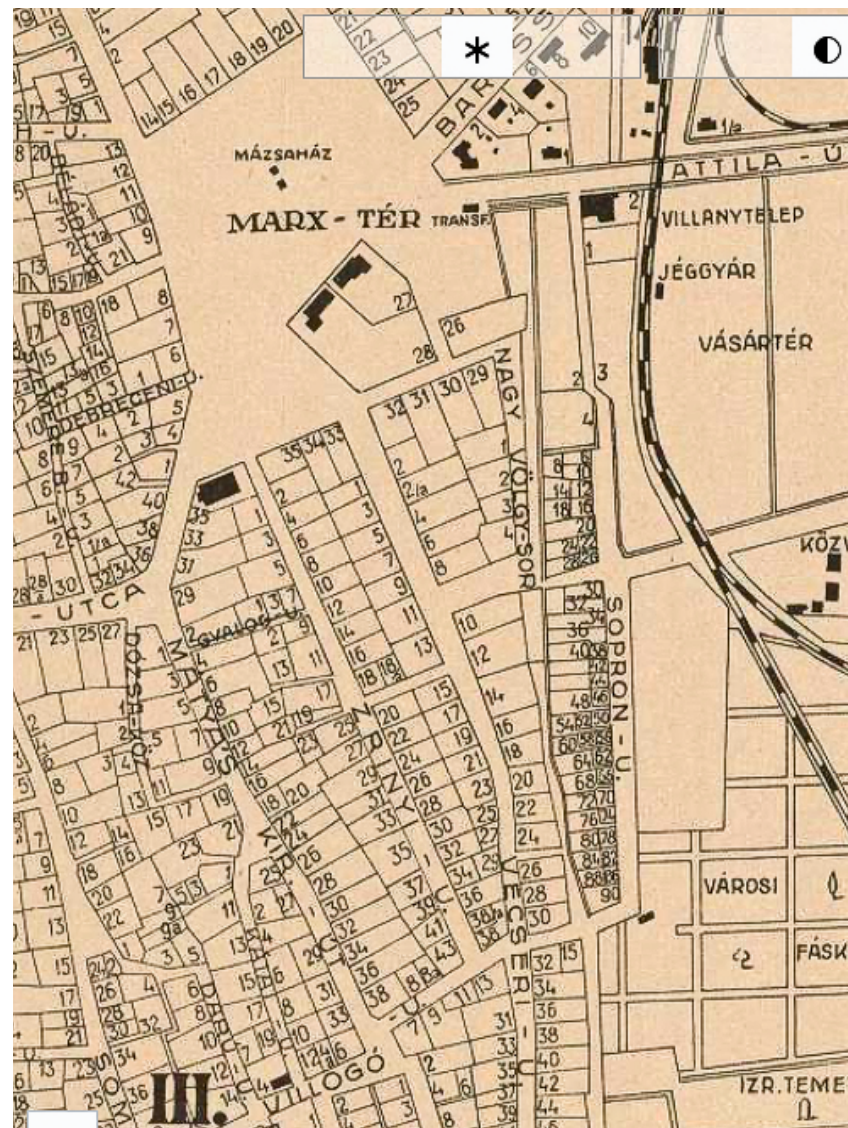
25 Harsányi, *A Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története*, 124. Harsányi quotes Dr János Purjesz as the source of the number of Jews in forced labour and deportees (footnote 41, 206). The fate of men in forced labour was out of the scope of the current research; thus, their exact number has not been investigated.

26 Sándor Gunst's last postcard sent from Sárvár on his way to the Auschwitz extermination camp can be seen on Centropa, accessed 7 September 2023, <https://www.centropa.org/en/photo/sandor-gunsts-last-postcard-deportation>.



they met their relatives. On 27 April, the mayor reported to the Ministry of Public Supply (Hun. *Közellátási Minisztérium*) that 530 persons in Szentes were considered Jewish under Act XV of 1941. This number included converts but excluded the men already in forced labour and those deported to Bácsstopolya.<sup>27</sup>

On 6 May 1944, the city council of Szentes made the decision to deport the local Jewish population, initiating the process by establishing a ghetto. The designated ghetto area encompassed the vicinity behind the Jewish synagogue (currently functioning as the city library), the even-numbered side of Vecseri Street, Nagyvölgy Row, and the houses on Apponyi Square located between these two streets. These dwellings consisted of simple, single-story countryside houses. The evacuation of residents and the relocation of Jews to the ghetto commenced on 9 May and was concluded on 11 May. According to an article dated 9 May 1944, approximately 120 to 150 Jewish families, totalling 415 individuals, were required to move into the ghetto, along with fifteen converted Jews, resulting in a total of 430 Jewish inhabitants.<sup>28</sup>



The streets of the former ghetto on a map of Szentes from 1948. Hungaricana HM, G I h 662/5.

<sup>27</sup> Harsányi, *A Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története*, 121.

<sup>28</sup> *Népújság*, 9 May 1944, 2. On the ghettoisation of Szentes, see Molnár, "Zsidó gettók," in Molnár, *Csendörök*, 95–96.

Stern's list sheds light on how the ghettoisation and the switch of apartments were carried out. The list includes the description of the houses of the would-be ghetto, as well as the wishes of its inhabitants for their future accommodation:

Apponyi square 27. Owner: László Berényi. 2 persons + daughter from Szeged with her son and one person, expecting her sister-in-law on 10th May, five persons in total. He brings with him the necessary furniture, and he has ten hens, which he can place elsewhere if necessary. He asks for a healthy flat because he is an elderly, sickly person, three rooms, preferably that of the Gunst family.<sup>29</sup>

The number of livestock, poultry and pets was recorded, just like the carts needed for the move:

Vecseri street 16 residents: gendarmerie officer Sándor Major, wife: Borbála Héjja. His father: József Major. Children: Attila Major, Borbála. They have a 3-room apartment with a kitchen and a pantry. They keep 11 pigs and hens. They would like to move to József Klein's or the Schwabs' house. 2 carts are needed for transportation.<sup>30</sup>

All owners asked for garden maintenance, and they were allowed to do timely gardening work. Thus, they could enter the ghetto from time to time.<sup>31</sup>

László Galla (Gunst) (b. 1916 in Szentes, the son of the president of the Jewish community, Sándor Gunst) was twenty-eight years old at the time of the Holocaust and remembered the events when the Centropa organisation interviewed him:

There was also a ghetto in Szentes, and there was a dispute about where to mark its borders – there was not much time for that. The Turul Alliance, a right-wing student association at the time, also intervened. One of its members – the son of a Calvinist priest from Szentes – and his fellow students suggested that the ghetto should be set up near the railway station because it was likely to be bombed by the British or Americans. Then at least the Jews would be destroyed.<sup>32</sup> This was done, although the ghetto was not then placed as close to the railway station as had been proposed. In Szentes, there must have been four or five hundred Jews who were not in labour service, but the ghetto here also housed the Jews of Szegvár, who were not many; their number must have been less than a hundred. In order to build the ghetto, family houses were taken from the population, where six or eight people lived in a room. My mother was also sent here in May 1944. Our squadron of [forced] labourers, which had been in various places over the years, was in Szentes when the ghettoisation took place, and the authorities even sent twenty men from our squadron to build the fence around the ghetto.<sup>33</sup>

The records of the ghettoisation of the Hungarian countryside only provide limited information, including the date of the ghettoisation, the location of the ghetto, as well as the height of the fence (two metres).<sup>34</sup> The Szentes Jews entering the ghetto

29 Documents of the city, currently Stern collection, list no. 2, 6.

30 Ibid., list no. 2, 4.

31 Edit Takács, *A Vecseri utcai ház titkai* [The Secrets of the House in Vecseri Street] (online source).

32 Karsai refers to the alliance's letter as an example of how it was one of the most eager and active associations to take a stand against Jews in the spring of 1944. László Karsai, "Ellenállni a gonoszoknak: Zsidók és magyarok a Soá idején" [Resisting Evil: Jews and Hungarians During the Shoah], in *Magyar megfontolások a Soáról* [Hungarian Reflections on the Soa], eds. Gábor Hamp, Özse Horányi, and László Rábai (Budapest and Pannónia: Balassi Kiadó, Pannónhalmi Főapátság, and Magyar Pax Romana, 1999), 111–123.

33 "Galla László".

34 Vidéki közösségek információs kartonjai D 5/1, "Szentes" (page 741 on [https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ZsidoSzervezetekIratai\\_1944\\_D\\_5\\_1/?pg=740&layout=s](https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ZsidoSzervezetekIratai_1944_D_5_1/?pg=740&layout=s)).



were allowed to bring limited personal belongings, such as wardrobes, mattresses, tables, chairs, and a few changes of clothing. The cramped ground-floor dwellings in the ghetto accommodated each family (consisting of four to five people) in a single room. Additionally, certain areas like back kitchens, semi-open passageways, and granaries in the outbuildings were considered separate rooms. The families placed in the courtyards of the ghetto encompassed individuals from various backgrounds, and while some families may have been considered marginal due to social, economic, or other factors, it is also plausible that their placement in the worse locations was merely a result of unfortunate circumstances or random allocation methods, given the limited available information. Video testimonies<sup>35</sup> starkly contrast the living conditions in the Szentes ghetto with those in the Szeged brick factory, emphasising the latter's notable harshness.

### The Jewish Orphans of Szeged

The unnamed orphans listed on Dr Stern's ghettoisation list were moved from 1 Bálint Street to 10 Vecseri Street, together with the two sons (Kálmán, aged thirteen, and Gábor, aged ten) of Mrs János Kellner, the caretaker. The list says "Jánosné Kellner with her two sons and 15 children from the orphanage".

Due to the contradicting documents and incomplete information, the reconstruction of the fifteen names of the orphans was challenging. However, the decision of the board of public guardianship authority listed fifteen children with pre-ghettoisation addresses:<sup>36</sup>



The Jewish orphans from Szentes – Mordechai Reismann is the second from the left in the front row. Photo of Mordechai Reismann.

35 Barta, Ágnes testimony, interview no. 51820, USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online, segment 31; Lajos, Cséri testimony, interview no. 48478, USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online, segment 58.

36 MNL CSML Szentesi Levéltára, Szentes Megyei Város Árvaszéke, 1738-26/1944.

Source	Family Name	First Name	Family Status	Address / Before Ghettoisation	City / Before Holocaust	Age	Year of Birth	Place of Birth
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Blaustein	Bódog	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	13	1933	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Blaustein	Olivér	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	10	1934	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Braun	Ignác	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	12	1932	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Csengeri	Béla	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	13	1931	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Csengeri	László	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	11	1933	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Cserven	György	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	10	1930	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Kohn	András	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	10	1934	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Kohn	József	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	9	1935	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Kun	Péter	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	16	1933	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Lóvy	Éva	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	6	1938	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Lichtner	László	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	11	1933	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Marmorstein	János	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	8	1936	
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Reismann	Tibor	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	11	1933	Huszt
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Reismann	Sándor	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	10	1934	Huszt
Szentes m. Árvaszék 1703/1944	Spitzer	Béla	child	Bálint u. 1.	Szentes	16	1928	

According to the names added to the Holocaust Memorial of Szentes, all of these children perished in the Holocaust. The Memorial Museum of the Hungarian-Speaking Jewry holds a copy of a photo of the boys in the Szentes Jewish orphanage, taken in March 1944.<sup>37</sup> In 2011, Mordechai (Sándor) Reismann (b. 14 April 1933 in Huszt / Khust, today in Ukraine) asked the public for help in identifying the children in the picture, but without success. I managed to contact him in 2022, and it turned out he is the sole survivor among the Jewish orphans of Szentes. His mother, who had seven children, was forced to transfer the children to an orphanage in Budapest because her husband had already perished as a forced labourer. Two siblings, Mordechai (Sándor) and Tibor, were sent from Budapest to Szentes since the Jewish orphanages in Budapest were already full. Mordechai can barely recall the months he spent in Szentes. The Jewish population of Szentes, including the orphanage children, were transported to Szeged in the middle of June 1944. At the end of June, the Jewish people gathered in Szeged were all deported. Mordechai, who was aged eleven at the time of the deportation, cannot recall if the orphans and their caregivers were transported with the second or third transport to Szentes. In an interview for the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation, recorded in 1997, Mordechai recalled how he decided to hide in Strasshof:

In the centre of the camp [in Strasshof], where they take us, they took us out of the camp and we got to the train there, they divided us there – the children separately, women separately, men separately. And then called all of those who can work to go to the side. And all those who do not have the strength, to go on the other side and all the children to the other side. And then the rumours were already very big that they were going to the final stop

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Benedek Kovács, *Módszertani újdonságok a holokauszt történetének iskolai feldolgozásában* [Methodological Innovations in the Teaching of Holocaust History in Schools], unpublished thesis (Oroszáza, 2015), 46–47.

of people, of children. We heard that they were going to burn them, kill them. And I say to my brother, Tibi [nickname of Tibor], “let’s run away among the grownups. Maybe we can get along there. What does it matter, they will kill us here or they will kill us there.” He says, he is afraid. I said, “you have nothing to fear. Let’s run away between the men, between the legs, they won’t see us. And we’ll see what happens.” Anyway, he was very scared. I told him, “listen, I count to three, the German will come with the horse from side to side, at some point I escape among the grownups, big legs”. I ran between the legs of the grownups and hid there. I was very small, and Tibi stayed with the children. They took the children, put them inside the wagons. We stand there, waiting, waiting. The train is not moving. The trucks came and took away those who can work separately, and others, like me who was among the grownups, they took us on foot. We walked day, night, day.<sup>38</sup>

I met Mordechai in Holon, Israel, in December 2022. In a personal conversation, he shared his memories of the Holocaust. Mordechai endured a harrowing journey through several locations including Neuhoof, Strasshof, Znaim, and Theresienstadt. During this time, he was forced to work on an agricultural holding where he also encountered Ukrainians. One particular incident stands out in his memory. While carrying out his duties, which involved extracting urine from cows and horses<sup>39</sup> and using it to water the fields, a Ukrainian fellow of his told him to take a shower (“*machst du ein Dusch, du*”) and, without warning, poured equine urine on him. Despite the stench, Mordechai had no choice but to continue working.

He vividly recounted how he had to rely solely on himself without any assistance from adults, enduring sporadic food rations (from time to time he got bread with lard) and having just one set of clothing with a shirt and shorts, thus being forced to take garments from the deceased in order to survive. He had not washed himself for a year and he developed a deep-seated mistrust of adults. After the war, returning to his hometown of Huszt, he received a warning from a neighbour not to enter their former house as the new occupants might kill him. As Mordechai never returned to Szentes, he was thought to be dead, and his name was added to the Holocaust Memorial of Szentes.<sup>40</sup>

In 1946, Mordechai was offered the possibility to make aliyah and thus, together with a group of children, he journeyed through Romania to Palestine. Upon arrival, he initially joined a yeshiva, but eventually left it after a year; he instead dedicated himself to learning a profession and became a confectioner. Mordechai has been married for over sixty-three years, and he is a father to four children and has a growing family with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Out of his six siblings, three of them managed to survive. Mordechai has been in contact with his sister Marika, who – with the help of OMZSA (*Országos Magyar Zsidó Segítő Akció*, Eng. National

38 Video testimony of Mordechai Reismann (Mordechai Rayzman), USC Shoah Foundation, Interview Code: 25498, segment 48; English translation by Roei Zeevi.

39 Cow urine is commonly used as a fertiliser in agriculture, as it is known to enhance crop growth due to its nutrient content and beneficial microbial activity. Equine urine, similarly to cow urine, may also possess agricultural benefits, although information on its specific use as a fertiliser are limited. There were several agricultural holdings in the surrounding of Strasshof; for a list of them, see Kinga Frojimovics and Judit Molnár, *Szeged – Strasshof – Szeged: Tények és emlékek a Bécsben és környékén “jégre tett” Szegedről deportáltakról. 1944–1947* [Szeged – Strasshof – Szeged: Facts and Memories of the Deportees from Szeged “Put on Ice” in and around Vienna. 1944–1947] (Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Állam- és Jogtudományi Kar Politológia Tanszék; Szegedi Magyar–Izraeli Baráti Társaság, 2021), 254–256. However, based solely on Mordechai’s description, it cannot be determined where exactly he had to work.

40 Phone conversation with Mordechai Reismann, 21 September 2022.



**Mordechai Reisman upon liberation – photo of Mordechai Reismann.**

Hungarian Jewish Aid Organisation)<sup>41</sup> – was taken in by a Budapest family during the war. Upon learning that his older sister, Magda, had to renounce her Judaism in order to be able to emigrate to Argentina with a Christian organisation, Mordechai made the decision to break ties with her. They were eventually reunited in Israel two decades later when Magda visited him.<sup>42</sup>

The recently published testimony<sup>43</sup> of Edit Csillag, a deportee from Mezőtúr (age not mentioned), matches the memories of Mordechai Reisman:

The saddest moment in the Strasshof office was when the turn came of the twelve abandoned children from the Szentes orphanage. The poor children stood in a corner, without a mother or father, not knowing where to turn. I was taking their details and they told me their guardian had abandoned them. I later learned from the Vienna office that these children had also been taken to Auschwitz. I do not know about their fate. There were many sad sights in Strasshof, but the fate of these twelve children was perhaps the most horrific.

<sup>41</sup> The organisation was founded in 1939 in Budapest with the goal of raising money to assist people who lost their livelihoods or their existence as a result of anti-Jewish legislation and restrictions. The alliance of all Hungarian Jewish denominations and the Zionists sought to strengthen Hungarian-Jewish self-help efforts.

<sup>42</sup> Personal conversation with Mordechai Reismann, 15 Decemebr 2022, in Holon, Israel.

<sup>43</sup> Csillag Edit visszaemlékezése, in *Szeged – Strasshof – Szeged*, 77.



According to this, there were twelve children who ended up in Strasshof, from where they were redirected to Auschwitz without their guardian, Mrs János Keller. We have no information on what happened to the remaining two children as there were fifteen orphans in Szentes (and Mordechai Reismann was not with the group anymore). As none of the children has a page of testimony in the Shoah name database of Yad Vashem, we do not know anything about their pre-war life, nor do we have information on how they ended up in Szentes and then possibly in Strasshof. All we know is that fourteen Jewish orphans from Szentes, alongside Jánosné Kellner and her two sons, Kálmán and Gábor, perished in the Holocaust. However, the lack of available information makes it challenging to piece together a comprehensive understanding of the fate of the orphans.

### Life in the Ghetto

Little is known about life in the Szentes ghetto as only limited information has been recorded or documented about the experiences and daily realities of its inhabitants. An article published on 6 May 1944 in *Népújság* (the newspaper of the city of Hódmezővásárhely) sheds light on what kind of issues the city leadership expected:

*In Szentes, the ghetto will be in the third district.*

According to the government decree, a ghetto can be set up in Szentes and negotiations are being prepared in the mayor's office. As a result of the negotiations so far, a ghetto will be set up in the part of the third district facing the railway station. The biggest problem now is to find suitable accommodation for the residents, which will probably be solved by housing them in part of the Jewish apartments. The other issue that needs to be resolved is the religious practice of the Jews settled in the ghetto. This will probably be solved by holding religious services in one of the apartments in the ghetto. The converted Jews will practice their religion by being visited by the pastors at set times. Thirdly, there is the question of food, because Jews settled in the ghetto will not be allowed to leave the ghetto at any time, nor will vendors be allowed to enter.<sup>44</sup>

According to the original plans, the ghetto area had a high fence and the medical care of the people living there was provided by the Jewish doctors who were ghettoised with them. Assuming that the place of death is correctly indicated as the address of the Szentes hospital, the fact that Mrs Hermann Schiller passed away in the hospital during the ghettoisation reveals that it was possible to arrange for a resident of the ghetto to be transferred there. However, we have no information on how many days she spent in the hospital and on what kind of medical care she received prior to her death.<sup>45</sup> The Jews were permitted to set up a Jewish orphanage and a poor house if they wished. However, again, we have no information as to whether this was implemented.<sup>46</sup>

István Léderer (b. 1925 in Szentes) gave testimony to *DEGOB* after the war:

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 1944<sup>47</sup> I was sent to the ghetto of Szentes together with my parents and brother. There was an armed guard in front of the ghetto, so it was not allowed to leave under any circumstances. In the ghetto, food was pro-

<sup>44</sup> *Népújság*, 6 May 1944, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Szentes death register 1943–1946, microfilm no. 005845939, entry no. 259.

<sup>46</sup> *Népújság*, 9 May 1944, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Most probably, and in accordance with other data, this happened between 9 and 11 May 1944. *Népújság*, 9 May 1944, 2.



vided in the form of ration coupons, which had to be handed in, and we could make up for it from the food we had brought with us.<sup>48</sup>

One of the most shocking records in the documents of the city hall is a typewritten food list of six pages, undated, listing 127 people and the exact quantity and quality of food that they were allowed to bring into the ghetto. The list must have been written in May 1944. Afterwards, in 1966, György Nagy, the president of the executive board of the city council of Szentes added the following remark: "I do not know the meaning of this bundle of documents, but it can be inferred that this much food could have been brought into the ghetto. Szentes, 28 January 1966."

Altogether, twenty-seven different food types can be distinguished. The most common types of food were fat (either indicated simply with the word "fat" or in some cases specified as goose fat), flour, dried beans, jam (with the unit number of jars or kilograms), farfel (a commonly used pasta type in Hungary, often offered as a side dish), potatoes, poppy seeds, and split peas. Some people brought semolina, walnuts, pasta, tomatoes (in jars), and cans of food into the ghetto. All the listed food types can be stored well for a long time. Even though plums are on the list, we must assume that it was either prunes or canned plums as no fresh plums were yet available in Hungary in the spring of 1944. As for the quantities of the food types, there is a big difference. Someone without a name, listed as "family settlement" (possibly the orphanage) brought fifty kilograms of flour, whereas others took only two to three kilograms. Unfortunately, no information is available about how and when the list was created, how long these foods lasted, and how the ingredients were combined to create meals. We also do not have information about whether people were willing to share the amount of food that they had and if cooking was done together using the various ingredients of each family. Ágnes Barta, a survivor from Szentes, remembers that, before moving into the ghetto, her family prepared roux using fat and flour, and put it into jars. This served as the basis for soups and other meals.<sup>49</sup> According to the Pinkas Hakehillot, the community leadership provided food with the help of suppliers who were permitted to enter the ghetto from time to time.<sup>50</sup>

We know from the food list that Jakab Fried brought only two kilograms of farfel and one kilogram of split peas into the ghetto.<sup>51</sup>

During the raid, Suzana Petrovic, a child survivor (née Hacker, b. 1935 in Novi Sad) was sent by her parents to live with her maternal grandparents in Szentes. Thus, she was also deported from there:

The ghetto in Szentes was isolated from the rest of the town. We took a minimal number of things and clothing, and I even brought my dog with me. So, to me, this was simply like moving to a new place, but we could not move around. We were there a month until the end of April or the middle of May [June], when there was a decree that all the Jews from that area of Hungary were to be deported.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, no direct information is available on certain marginalised groups. The names of the fifteen converted Jews of Szentes have not been recorded, precluding any further insights into their potential status as a marginal group within the

48 "Jegyzőkönyv 2979" [Testimony of István Léderes (no. 2979)], DEGOB (Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság), accessed 29 August 2022, <http://degob.hu/index.php?showjk=2979>.

49 Ágnes Barta testimony, interview no. 51820, USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online.

50 "Szentes", in *Pinkas Hakehillot Hungary*, 1975.

51 Documents of the city, currently Stern collection, list no. 4, 1.

52 "Suzana Petrovic", Centropa, accessed 19 September 2022, <https://www.centropa.org/en/biography/suzana-petrovic>.

Sor- szám	N é v	
33.	Szigeti Ernő	1/2 kg. zsir, 10 kg. liszt, 2 kg. bab, 1.5 kg. borsó, 4 üveg lekvár, 1 kg. szilva lekvár, 2 kg. tészta.
34.	Dr. Wellisch István	2 kg. liszt, 1 lt. zsir, 2 kg. borsó, 2 kg. bab, 2 kg. tarhonya.
35.	Lóderer István	2 lt. zsir, 5 kg. liszt, 3 kg. bab, 2 kg. borsó, 3 kg. tarhonya.
36.	Özv. Hahn Izidorné	1 lt. zsir, 2 kg. liszt, 1 kg. tarhonya.
37.	Flesch László	2 lt. zsir, 5 kg. liszt, 2 kg. borsó, 2 kg. bab, 1 kg. tarhonya, 8 üveg lekvár.
38.	Pekete István	2 lt. zsir, 8 kg. liszt, 3 lt. bab, 2 kg. borsó, 6 kg. tarhonya, 2 üveg lekvár.
39.	Wellisch Imre	1 kg. zsir, 1 kg. bab, 2 kg. borsó, 2 kg. tarhonya, 20 kg. kenyérliszt, 40 kg. 0-ás liszt /ellátott/.
40.	Dr. Csukermann Andorné	2 kg. zsir, 5 kg. liszt, 3 kg. borsó, 3 kg. tarhonya, 10 üveg paradicsom, 2 kg. lekvár.
41.	Kardos Lajos	3 kg. liszt, 2 lt. zsir, 2 kg. tarhonya, 2 lt. lekvár, 5 üveg bab, 1/2 kg. mák, 7 lit. paradicsom.
42.	Özv. Flóger Miksné	2 kg. bab, 5 kg. liszt, 1 kg. mák.
43.	Toffler Lajos	1/2 kg. zsir, 5 kg. liszt, 3 drb. konzerv, 1 kg. mák, 1 kg. só, 4 üveg paradicsom.
44.	Özv. Müller Gyuláné	4 kg. zsir, 5 kg. tarhonya, 25 kg. liszt, 1 kg. mák, 5 kg. mák, 5 üveg lekvár.
45.	Szántó Soma	zsir -, 4 kg. liszt, 5 kg. bab, 1 kg. mák, 5 kg. lekvár.
46.	Lampel Jenő	1 kg. bab, 3 kg. liszt, 5 kg. tarhonya, 2 lit. lekvár.
47.	Singer Árain	1 lt. zsir, 3 kg. liszt, 1 kg. tarhonya, 1 kg. bab, 5 üveg paradicsom.
48.	Feuerer János	1 lt. zsir, 3 kg. liszt, 1 kg. bab, 1 kg. mák, 2 kg. tarhonya.
49.	Polgár Sándor	1 kg. zsir, 2 kg. tarhonya, 3 kg. liszt, 1 kg. borsó, 1 üveg ose.
50.	Singer Mór	1/2 kg. zsir, 1.5 kg. bab, 6 kg. liszt, 1 kg. tarhonya.
51.	Braun Árpád	1.5 lt. zsir, 5 kg. liszt, 4 kg. tarhonya, 2 kg. bab, 3 kg. borsó.
52.	Strasser Márton	-
53.	Lichtenstein Rezső	1 kg. zsir, 2 kg. liszt, 3 kg. bab, 2 kg. borsó, 5 kg. lekvár, 2 kg. tarhonya.
54.	Özv. Gál Dezsőné	1 lt. zsir, 3 kg. tészta, 10 kg. liszt, 3 lt. lekvár.
55.	Német Jenő	6 lt. zsir, 25 kg. liszt, 1 szilke szilvalekvár, 6-8 üveg egyéb lekvár, 3 kg. tarhonya.
56.	Dr. Szamos Lászlóné	5 lt. zsir, 30 kg. kenyérliszt, 3 kg. 0-ás liszt.
57.	Dr. Székely László	4 lt. zsir, 6 kg. liszt, 2 kg. tarhonya, 2 kg. bab, 1 kg. borsó, 6 lt. lekvár.
58.	Özv. Csukor Emilné	1 lt. zsir, 35 kg. kenyérliszt /ellátottak/, 1 kg. tarhonya, 2 kg. tészta.
59.	Dr. Német Dezső	5 lt. zsir, 20 kg. liszt, 5 kg. bab, 2 kg. borsó, 5 kg. tarhonya, 8 üveg lekvár, 8 üveg befőtt.
60.	Özv. Eszéri Lajosné	2 lt. zsir, 5 kg. liszt, 1 kg. bab, 1 kg. tarhonya, 1.5 kg. gríz, 1 kg. tészta.

A food list from the Szentes ghetto – collection of Dr Sándor Stern.

ghetto. Reconstructing the living conditions in the Szentes ghetto for marginalised groups, including middle-aged and elderly women, presents challenges due to the lack of publicly available testimonies addressing their specific experiences, necessitating reliance on fragmentary alternative sources that provide only a limited understanding of their daily lives in the ghetto.

The stay in the Szentes ghetto was brief due to a subsequent deportation decree for all Jews in the area, lasting approximately one month. Despite strict security measures, it is presumed that the Szentes Jews managed to maintain some level of contact with the outside world, potentially through interactions with the original residents of the houses.<sup>53</sup>

53 Takács, *A Vecseri utcai ház titkai*.

## Deportation to Auschwitz/Strasshof via Szeged

On 16 June 1944, the residents of the Szentes ghetto were transported by rail to Szeged, to the concentration camp set up in the brick factory on Cserzy Mihály Street. Inside the camp, which could accommodate about 2,000 people, about 8,000 to 9,000 people were crammed. The prisoners of the brick factory were transported by three transports on 25, 27, and 28 June. The first train and the first half of the second train arrived at Auschwitz, whereas the second half of the second train, and the third train, were diverted to Strasshoff near Vienna, from where the prisoners were transported to various camps in Austria.<sup>54</sup> About 70 to 80 per cent of the deportees in the latter group survived, including Jews from Szentes.<sup>55</sup> After the liberation of the camps, a minority of the survivors left for Western Europe or Israel, Canada, and the United States.

About 200 Jews from Szentes survived the Shoah, but not all of them moved back to Szentes, which had been taken over by Soviet troops already on 8 October 1944. Some settled in Budapest, and some emigrated, resulting in the fact that, by 1949, 109 people belonged to the Szentes Jewish community, and only 101 paid the community tax.<sup>56</sup> Today, there is one Jew left in Szentes.

The majority returned to Hungary, and many of them also returned to Szentes. Those who returned tried to get back on their feet, overcome the economic difficulties after the war, and revive their businesses. However, some could not get back their belongings and left their hometown. For those who persevered, those who started again, maintaining a living was made impossible by the nationalisations of 1949 and the 1950s. The once independent artisans and tradespersons either became employees of the state or of cooperatives in their businesses, or left their reclaimed homes voluntarily.

In 1947, in the Jewish cemetery of Szentes, the re-established community inaugurated a Holocaust memorial, which includes 328 names of the victims from Szentes (286) and nearby Szegvár (28), those who perished in the deportations and forced labour.<sup>57</sup> In the 1960s, the synagogue, still owned by the Jewish community, was mainly abandoned, resulting in the building falling apart. The city of Szentes bought it in 1987, and in 1998 the synagogue was converted into a library where it hosts exhibits and cultural events. The exterior has remained the same as it was for the synagogue, but the inside has been redesigned. A memorial is located in an entrance room, and the garden on the left includes plaques to commemorate the Jewish people of Szentes. The synagogue's original iron fence surrounds the garden.<sup>58</sup>

In April 2019, a Holocaust monument<sup>59</sup> was inaugurated in the auditorium of the Ferenc Zsoltos Technical School, commemorating the Jewish children who were

54 Frojimovics and Molnár, *Szeged – Strasshof – Szeged*, 195, 236.

55 Dóra Pataricza, "‘Put My Mother on the List Too!’ – Reconstructing the Deportation Lists of the Szeged Jewish Community", in *Deportations in the Nazi Era*, eds. Henning Borggräbe and Akim Jah (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023).

56 Harsányi A *Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története*, 124.

57 Harsányi, A *Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története*, 124. The number seems high considering that an estimated 50 per cent of the deportees survived. When comparing the names on the Holocaust memorial with the list of deportees, it is clear that many names were added to the memorial of victims who were not deported from Szentes: survivors added the names of their family members even though these were not from Szentes. The Szentes Holocaust Memorial includes 328 names, 146 female and 182 male victims, indicating that a high rate of forced labourers were killed. Further investigation is needed.

58 קהילת יהודי סנטש, in Museum of the Jewish People, accessed September 26, 2022, <https://dbs.anumuseum.org.il/skn/he/c6/e215131/מקום/סנטש>.

59 Renáta Zsina and Natália Varga designed the circular monument.





Holocaust Memorial Szentes – picture taken by Dóra Pataricza.

victims of the Holocaust. They had once attended the Jewish elementary school of Szentes, the elementary school for girls, or the Mihály Horváth Secondary School. Altogether, fifteen children were identified based on conversations with survivors and historical documents.<sup>60</sup> The project was led by Benedek Kovács, the history teacher at the school, and was undertaken from 2015 to 2018. Their list – and thus that on the Holocaust monument – is incomplete and, due to a lack of sources, they could not identify the students of the Jewish boys' orphanage.<sup>61</sup> However, it is noteworthy that, with this article, the sources have become available and the names of these children have therefore become known. In light of this development, I advocate for the establishment of a new memorial in Szentes, dedicated specifically to honouring the Jewish orphans who were deported from the town.

## Conclusion

The core aim of this current research is to create the most extensive list of individuals who were deported from Szentes, with their numerical and demographic information, and thereby allow for an in-depth analysis of the material and for further analyses. While several records on the ghettoisation of Szentes have survived, some of them are difficult to access, and many have not been investigated in detail. It would be more favourable if all sources were accessible to researchers. Unfortunately, the richness of sources does not apply to the immediate post-war period, resulting in the fact that there are no known documents on the survivors or the victims. Fragmentary information on marginalised groups, such as the Jewish orphan boys of Szentes, can be partially retrieved with the help of digital humanities and a thorough analysis

60 László Czeiger, József Feuerer, Borbála Fischer, Ferenc Gleichmann, Rózsa Gleichmann, Gábor Kellner, András Lederer, Éva Lówy, Pál Lówy, Mária Németh, György Porjesz, Györgyi Rác, László Simkó, György Smolka, András Székely.

61 Kovács, 2019.

of Holocaust-related documents. Further research is necessary to analyse the fate of other marginalised groups and that of forced labourers from Szentes.



## Bibliography

### Primary oral and written sources:

- Barta, Ágnes testimony. Interview no. 51820. USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online.
- Cséri, Lajos testimony. Interview no. 48478. USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online.
- Csillag Edit visszaemlékezése = Memoir of Edit Csillag. In: Frojimovics – Molnár, 77.
- Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság. "Jegyzőkönyv 2979" [Testimony of István Léderes (nr. 2979)]. Accessed 29 August 2022. <http://degob.hu/index.php?showjk=2979>.
- Documents of the city, currently Stern collection. List no. 1.
- Documents of the city, currently Stern collection. List no. 2.
- Documents of the city, currently Stern collection. List no. 3.
- Documents of the city, currently Stern collection. List no. 4.
- "Galla, László". Centropa. Accessed 22 September 2022. <https://www.centropa.org/hu/biography/galla-laszlo>.
- Jávor, Zsuzsa testimony. Interview no. 50265. USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online.
- MNL CSML Szentesi Levéltár. Szentes Város Polgármesteri Hivatalának iratai, 1256/1944.
- MNL CSML Szentesi Levéltára. Szentes Megyei Város Árvaszéke, 1738-26/1944.
- "Petrovic, Suzana". Centropa. Accessed 19 September 2022. <https://www.centropa.org/en/biography/suzana-petrovic>.
- Speech of Imre Szirbik at the Holocaust Memorial ceremony in June 2017. Szentes Info. Accessed 7 September 2023. <https://www.szentesinfo.hu/mozaik/2017/5/holo.htm>.
- Szeged Jewish Community Archive. Documents from Szentes.
- Szentes death register 1943–1946. Microfilm no. 005845939, entry no. 198.
- Vidéki közösségek információs kartonjai D 5/1, "Szentes" (page 741 on [https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ZsidoSzervezetekIrtai\\_1944\\_D\\_5\\_1/?pg=740&layout=s](https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/ZsidoSzervezetekIrtai_1944_D_5_1/?pg=740&layout=s)).

### Secondary sources:

1920. évi népszámlálás 1. A népesség főbb demográfiai adatai. Községek és népesebb puszták, telepek szerint [1920 Census 1. Main Demographic Data of the Population. By Communes and More Populous Deserts and Settlements]. Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda Rt., 1923.
- Barabás, Györgyi, and Magyar Tudományos Akadémia. *Magyarországi Zsidó Hitközségek Egyletek Társulatok Alapszabályai 1705–2005* [Statutes of Jewish Communities Associations Societies in Hungary 1705–2005]. Budapest: MTA Judaisztikai Kutatóközpont, 2007.
- Braham, Randolph L. *A népiártás politikája: A holocaust Magyarországon* [The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary]. Budapest: Belvárosi Kvk., 1997.
- Csongrád Megyei Hírlap. 7 March 1963.
- Frojimovics, Kinga, and Judit Molnár. *Szeged – Strasshof – Szeged: Tények és emlékek a Bécsben és környékén "jégre tett" Szegedről deportáltakról. 1944–1947* [Szeged – Strasshof – Szeged: Facts and Memories of the Deportees from Szeged "Put on Ice" in and around Vienna. 1944–1947]. Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Állam-és Jogtudományi Kar Politológia Tanszék; Szegedi Magyar-Izraeli Baráti Társaság, 2021.
- Harsányi, László. *A Szentesi Izraelita Hitközség Története. A magyarországi zsidó hitközségek monográfiái 3* [History of the Jewish Community of Szentes. Monographs of the Jewish Communities in Hungary 3]. ed. Sándor Scheiber. Budapest: 1970.

- Karsai, László. "Ellenállni a gonosznak: Zsidók és magyarok a Soá idején" [Resisting Evil: Jews and Hungarians During the Shoah]. In *Magyar megfontolások a Soáról* [Hungarian Reflections on the Soa], edited by Gábor Hamp, Özséb Horányi, and László Rábai, 111–123. Budapest and Pannonhalma: Balassi Kiadó, Pannonhalmi Főapátság, and Magyar Pax Romana, 1999.
- Klein, Rudolf. *Synagogues in Hungary 1782–1918: Genealogy, Typology and Architectural Significance*. Budapest: Terc, 2017.
- Kovács, Benedek. *Módszertani újdonságok a holokauszt történetének iskolai feldolgozásában* [Methodological Innovations in the Teaching of Holocaust History in Schools]. Unpublished thesis. Orosháza, 2015.
- Kovács, Benedek. "Az élet csokrába font nevek". *Remény* 2019/2.
- Molnár, Judit. "Mentesítési ügyek Szegeden" [Cases of Exemptions in Szeged]. In *Csendőrök, hivatalnokok, zsidók* [Gendarmes, Officials, Jews], edited by Judit Molnár, 107–131. Szeged: Szegedi Zsidó Hitközség Évkönyvei 1. 2000.
- Molnár Judit. "Zsidó gettók 1944-ben a Dél-Alföldön" [Jewish Ghettos in 1944 in the Southern Plain of Hungary]. In *Csendőrök, hivatalnokok, zsidók* [Gendarmes, officials, Jews], edited by Judit Molnár, 71–107. Szeged: Szegedi Zsidó Hitközség Évkönyvei 1., 2000.
- Népújság*, 9 May 1944.
- Népújság*, 6 May 1944.
- Pataricza, Dóra. "'Put My Mother on the List Too!' – Reconstructing the Deportation Lists of the Szeged Jewish Community". In *Deportations in the Nazi Era*, edited by Henning Borggräbe and Akim Jah. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023.
- "קהילת יהודי סנטש" [Szentes Jewish Community]. Museum of the Jewish People. Accessed 26 September 2022. <https://dbs.anumuseum.org.il/skn/he/c6/e215131/מקום/סנטש>.
- "Szentes". In *Pinkas Hakehillot Hungary*, edited by Theodore Lavi, 406. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1975.
- Takács, Edit. "A Vecseri utcai ház titkai" [The Secrets of the House in Vecseri Street]. *Szentesi Élet*, 7 May 2004. [https://www.szentesinfo.hu/szentesielet/2004/18\\_0507/07.htm](https://www.szentesinfo.hu/szentesielet/2004/18_0507/07.htm).
- "A volt zsinagóga története" [The History of the Former Synagogue]. Szentes. Accessed 25 September 2022. [https://www.szentes.hu/?page\\_id=996](https://www.szentes.hu/?page_id=996).

**Dóra Pataricza** is a post-doctoral researcher in Jewish History. She is currently working at Åbo Akademi University in Turku, Finland, in a project titled “Antisemitism Undermining Democracy” that is funded by the Kone Foundation. Since January 2020, she has also been conducting a project that reconstructs the fate of Holocaust victims from the Szeged region, and which is funded by the Claims Conference and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. She is the editor and translator of Immanuel Löw’s essay “The Kiss”, which will be published in 2024 with Hebrew Union College Press. In 2021, she received the Immanuel Löw Award from the Szeged Jewish Community. Email: [dora.pataricza@abo.fi](mailto:dora.pataricza@abo.fi)

Quotation: Dóra Pataricza, Tracing Szentes’ Jewish Deportees. Insights from Unprocessed Records and Digital Methods, in S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 10 (2023) 2, 91–110.

DOI: [10.23777/sn.0223/art\\_dpat01](https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0223/art_dpat01)

S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

ISSN 2408-9192 | 10 (2023) 2 | <https://doi.org/10.23777/sn.0223>

This article is licensed under the following Creative Commons License: CC-BY-NC-ND  
(Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives)