The Hungarian Society of Writers calls the Hóman statue a “national disgrace”

We, the Hungarian Society of Writers, Critics and Literary Translators (“Szépírók Társasága”), protest against the decision to erect a statue to Bálint Hóman, one of the main fomenters of the racial civil war of the Horthy era. The statue is to be unveiled in Székesfehérvár on the 130th anniversary of Homan’s birth on 29 December, with the support of the Ministry of Justice, the city’s mayor and the ruling party’s representatives at national and local levels.

As the minister of culture for the Darányi, Imrédy, Teleki, Bárdossy and Kállay governments Hóman continually supported the ever tighter restrictions on the rights of the Hungarian Jewish population. His political activity was closely tied to the 15-year process from the beginning of the 1930s leading up to the deportations whereby Hungarian society became acclimatised to the manner in which so their fellow citizens were being deprived of their freedom and – in many cases – their lives.

As a historian, academic and minister he took an active role in initiating and then preparing the first Jewish law. Later, he prepared the prime minister Pál Teleki in his memorandums for his negotiations with Germany. In these memorandums he wrote that to win the complete confidence of the Germans Teleki should accept “Hitler and Mussolini’s thinking on race” and, “putting previous compromises aside”, should propose new “race laws”. “For we must keep aware that the Jews, even if privileged, furthermore those with Jewish ancestry or connections, must be the enemy of the Hungarian authorities”. He himself proposed the Eighth law in 1942 on the legal status of Jewish religion, which severely restricted the rights of those deemed to be Jewish.

He took the initiative in the racist reform of the professional chambers of doctors, lawyers and engineers, and consistently supported each twist tightening the Jewish laws. The Jewish laws that he supported and voted for affected 825,000 people. After ten years’ work as a minister he resigned in 1942 in protest at the wavering policies of Miklós Kállay, for their lack of a clear pro-German line. In 1943 and 1944 he signed two memorandums about the need for unconditional loyalty to the Germans and about the deportation of the Jews. After the Arrowcross takeover of power he was a member of the fascist parliament and took his seat in its sessions. In early 1945 he held talks with Ferenc Szálasi, the Arrowcross leader, in Sopron about how they could jointly find “some kind of political solution to unite the whole of the Hungarian right wing”.

The Ministry of Justice is contributing 15 million Forints (£34,000 – €50,000) towards the statue, which is being erected on state property, and the Bálint Hóman Cultural Foundation is to receive almost 2 million Forints from the Székesfehérvár City Council.

The state and the ruling party’s support for this project is outrageous, given Hóman’s central role in the Jewish laws. Neither his work as an MP for Székesfehérvár – from his desk he thrust 10 per cent of the local population on the road to death – nor his academic work reduce his moral responsibility in any way.

No one who has played such a major role in shaping the laws that deprived part of the Hungarian population of their rights should be honoured with a statue in Hungary today. It is a national disgrace. It tells the descendants of the departed, the honest members of Hungarian society and indeed the whole world that the suffering of the Hungarian Jews and their murder in their hundreds of thousands is of secondary importance in our history.

**Szépírók Társasága - Hungarian Society of Writers, Critics and Literary Translators**

Organisations supporting the petition:

Beszélő folyóirat

Eleven emlékmű - az én történelmem csoport

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Magyartanárok Egyesülete

Oktatói Hálózat

Pedagógusok Demokratikus Szakszervezete

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