

The law declared the criminal nature of the Bulgarian Communist party, listing a long list of acts committed by the party and its members to subjugate the Bulgarian people. In particular, the law stressed the systematic violation of fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression in many forms (political, ideological and religious freedom). In 2016 its text was amended to promote the ban of all publicly displayed communist symbolism.

Promulgated, State Gazette, Issue No 37 of 5 May 2000.

The following unofficial translation is provided by:

<http://www.decommunization.org/English/Articles/BZ1.htm>

Law on Declaring the Criminal Nature of the Communist Regime in Bulgaria

Promulgated, State Gazette, Issue No 37 of 5 May 2000

Art.1. (1) The Bulgarian Communist Party (named at that time Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communists)) seized the power on 9 September 1944 with the help of a foreign force, which had declared war on Bulgaria and in contradiction to the Constitution in force (Tarnovo Constitution).

(2) The Bulgarian Communist Party is responsible for State governance from 9 September 1944 to 10 November 1989 that has led the country to national catastrophe.

Art. 2. (1) The leadership and the leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party are responsible for:

1. purposefully and deliberately ruining the values of European civilization;
2. intentional violation of human rights and liberties;
3. unprecedented elimination of the Members of XXV National Assembly and of all innocent people convicted by the co called "Peoples' Court"
4. the moral and economic decline of the State;
5. establishing a centralised and directive ruling of economy which has led to its decay;
6. crushing and repealing the traditional property right principles;
7. dissolving people's moral values and encroaching upon their religious freedom;
8. employing permanent terror against people who disagree with the system of ruling and against whole groups of the population;
9. abusing education, training, science and culture for political and ideological purposes, including justifying and creation of motivation to the acts described above;
10. unscrupulous destruction of nature.

(2) The communist regime is responsible for:

1. depriving citizens of any possibility to express political will by forcing them to hide their opinion of the situation in the country and forcing them to express in public their approval for facts and circumstances, which they knew were not true and which even constituted crime; this was achieved by persecutions and threats to persecute individuals, their families and close persons;
2. systematic violation of the basic human rights, oppressing whole groups of the population, formed on political, social, religious or ethnic basis, regardless of the fact that in 1970 the People's Republic of Bulgaria had already joined the international instruments in the field of human rights;
3. violating the main principles of democracy, rule of law, international agreements and legislation in force thus placing the Communist Party and its representatives' interests above the Law;
4. persecuting citizens using all means of power, such as:
 - a. executions, inhuman imprisonment regimes, forced labour camps, tortures and cruel violence;
 - b. certifying or placing people in psychiatric institutions as a mean of political repression;
 - c. depriving from the right of property;
 - d. preventing and banning education and the pursuit of a profession;

- e. preventing free movement in the country as well as out of the country;
 - f. deprivation of citizenship;
5. committing unpunished crimes and awarding unlawful privileges to persons involved in the commission of crimes and in the persecutions of another persons;
 6. subjecting the interests of Bulgaria to a foreign country to the extent which led to the ruin of national dignity and to practical loss of state sovereignty.

Art. 3. (1) The circumstances specified in Art. 1 and Art. 2 give ground to declare the criminal nature of the communist regime in Bulgaria from 9 September 1944 to 10 November 1989.

(2) The Bulgarian Communist Party has been a criminal organisation resembling other organisations based on its ideology, the activities of which were aimed at suppressing human rights and the democratic system.

Art. 4. All actions taken by persons during the specified period to resist and to reject the communist regime and its ideology are fair, morally justified and deserving honour.