

## **AGAINST HATRED AND FOR THE ART OF LIVING TOGETHER**

### Position of the National Council of the BSP

#### I.

1. A wave of instilling the sense of separation and intolerance has been growing stronger for the last couple of months - religious, ethnic, party and political intolerance. The public was swept over by messages that only reaffirmed "hatred for the sake of hatred alone". It is the beliefs of the extremist Right in Bulgaria and its fanatic refusal to accept its failure at the last Parliamentary Elections that are at the core of this campaign. This translates into a flagrant disrespect for democratic principles, constitutional norms and first and foremost - disrespect for Bulgarian people's will. Generating detestation because of lawfully recognized election results is immoral and against the rules.

2. We believe that in this country there are no objective prerequisites for such a drastic, unprovoked exacerbation of relations in society. We are fully aware that everyday life in the conditions of a serious social and economic crisis makes many people "look for the enemy" and this "enemy", the "usual culprit", this "scapegoat" is very often "the other" - the person of different ethnic background, religion, with different ideas and political views. This is not new - we have seen it many times in history, we see it today as well, even in the most developed democracies. Once intolerance for "the other" was right by the cradle of **fascism and anti-Semitism**; today it provokes extreme nationalism, xenophobia, unacceptable neo-Nazi acts and radical hatred for left-wing ideas.

3. Unprovoked confrontation speech, the pressing of "hate speech" is contagious. It could be heard both from the parliamentary tribune and the media ambo. We hear it from representatives of Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (CEDB), but also from Ataka, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) and especially from some parties that are not represented in Parliament such as Bulgaria without Censorship (BWC), IMRO- BNM, National Front for Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB), etc.

Each political force has to shoulder its responsibility for terminating aggressive speech because it disgraces and poisons Bulgarian public and political life.

#### II.

1. Hate speech evolves into hate politics. There are quite a few media that have turned both into a "medium" and loudspeaker for that politics. We got to the point in which there were calls that directly encouraged violence and aggression against "the others". For months everybody who thinks, writes and speaks differently from what the self-proclaimed guardians of "new moral values"

command, have been subjected to open, shameless censorship and pressure. Each and every one of them, people with different political affiliations was accused and condemned as “an enemy of the people”.

2. Discrimination and ostracism against left-wing, socialist ideas and beliefs, as well as against anybody who upholds them, have been very distinct.

3. For years the Bulgarian public has been scandalized by the so called “Lukov`s March” organized by extreme nationalist and neo-Nazi forces. General Lukov is their leader from the hereafter; he was the person who established the Bulgarian National Legions, one of the main bearers of the Nazi ideological doctrine in Bulgaria and a very close associate of Hermann Göring. The “March” in question serves the purpose of idealizing, praising and exonerating fascism and anti-Semitism and its holding is an affront to public order, moral values and conscience.

4. Hate politics “evolved” into depraved hate “aesthetics” which is manifested in the systemic defiling of monuments of Bulgarian anti-fascists. Soviet Army monuments have turned into a particular target for aggression and this campaign is directly linked with the attempts to plant Russophobia in Bulgarian society. Both “Lukov`s March” and the defiling of these monuments are part of the distortion and misrepresentation of both Bulgarian and European history. The responsibility of this type of politics that has been made for almost twenty-five years now is entirely with the Bulgarian Right.

5. Our position is firm- attempts to exonerate fascism in Bulgaria have to be terminated.

### III.

1. The way that ethnic Turks, Roma and foreigners are spoken of has gone beyond the civilization bounds. If today society accepts the attack on Dzhumaiia Mosque in Plovdiv good-naturedly, tomorrow we will wake up to an attack on a synagogue and after that- on an Orthodox church.

2. The topic of the so called “Waqf” property has become a source and field of public and religious confrontation. All issues relating to this property were solved more than 100 years ago by force of the Peace Treaties after Bulgaria`s liberation and the proclaiming of our independence when the whole public property of the Ottoman Empire on our land was transformed into public property of the Bulgarian State. The challenging of these facts fundamental for the state and legal foundations of present-day Bulgaria is unfounded from a historical and legal perspective. In order for Waqfs to exist there has to be Rayah, in order for Rayah to exist there has to be an Ottoman Empire. It is not acceptable that in its essence a private issue such as this one be turned into a concealed claim for the actual restoration of the Ottoman legal order.

3. At the same time a well-meaning legal initiative, aiming to support Denominations in their noble and humane public mission, was exploited and deformed beyond recognition and in an absurd way it turned out to be an additional source of public tension.

4. We declare our conviction that all religious buildings and places, devoted to prayer that are museums or protected cultural buildings and are public state property or public municipal property have to retain their status.

#### IV.

1. The topic of the so called “gypsy crime” has been exploited intensively by a number of prominent political and public figures for the past 10-15 years. Crime has no ethnic profile; a felony is a serious violation of the rule of law and the criminal penalty for a committed crime is imposed irrespective of the racial, ethnic or religious belonging of the defendant. Crime should not be divided into “Bulgarian”, “Turkish” or “Roma”. At the same time there *is* a problem and it has to be pointed out clearly- the local population in smaller towns and villages are victims of unprovoked, intensive and brutal domestic offences, which in some areas reach a terrifying scope and force people to live under the conditions of enemy siege or even to leave their homes.

2. We see the main reason for these dramatic developments in the state`s neoliberal dogma-motivated withdrawal from its main function- to guarantee public order and citizens` security.

3 . We support the actions of the Ministry of Interior against heavy domestic crime and evaluate the participation of gendarmerie forces in them as well-founded. The undeclared domestic war against people in Bulgarian villages, especially against the elderly, has to be stopped with the force of the law and with all tools that state power has at its disposal.

#### **In these conditions the BSP feels obliged to state that:**

- Bulgaria is the eve of the European Elections. European values and first and foremost the idea of human and citizens` rights and the understanding of tolerance are the foundations of united Europe. The BSP has always been fully aware of the real risks and threats related to playing the nationalist card and political actions that intentionally divide people and make them confront each other. That is why we warn that the end result of tolerance for anti-European and anti-constitutional hate politics will be escalation and multiplication of hate crimes and increase in confrontation among citizens.

We will observe the policy of combating aggressive nationalism and xenophobia in a categorical manner.

- We are convinced that instilling hatred is an anti-European and an **anti-national** policy which we reject. That is why we appeal to political forces and mostly to the ones represented in Parliament, to comply with the Declaration of the National Assembly, to not allow their representatives use hate speech against the unity of our nation and our national interests.

- We condemn tolerance for intolerance, the instilling of the sense of hatred, mutual intolerance and discrimination on the basis of ethnic, religious, social and political belonging.

- We oppose the misuse of requests for compulsory classes in children`s mother tongues and the attempts to put a historical stigma on certain events by legislative changes that are unacceptable from a legal perspective.

Our slogan is "Bulgaria without Hatred"!

(Adopted by force of a decision of the NC of the BSP on 7 March 2014)