

Picture by Eddie Holly, reedited

## ZIELONA GÓRA COMMUNITY



Zielona Góra, Poland, 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 2014

**DANE SKŁADAJĄCEGO POZEW  
ZOSTAŁY USUNIĘTE**

Zielona Góra Ras Tafari Community  
to  
Dział Prawny  
Murator S.A.

## Letter Before Claim

Via Electronic Mail, Poczta Polska and Facsimile

Due to the Claimants intention to fill a civil complaint against the Defendant:  
Murator S.A.  
ul. Dęblińska 6  
04-187 Warszawa  
concerned press title: „[www.se.pl](http://www.se.pl), Super Express”  
Warszawa, Poland

hereby we propose settlement before litigation of the Defendant to the respective justice tribunal.

### **Matter of the case**

Recently our groups and sub-groups observed that Your organisation issued a magazine article that publicly abused our rituals and spiritual values by claiming that those who support use of



marihuana, have „blood on their hands”, and by providing a sequence of conclusions that we found extremely biased to the point of fulfilling the conditions of a hate crime against our spiritual denomination.

Among many other remarks defamatory to us, the article advert seemed as if purposely promoted alleged connection between marihuana usage and death. If the publisher of the article would like to research the issue to provide less biased conclusions, he could have used the most popular Internet search engine. Our community does not support driving cars after using medicaments, that can slow down reaction time, however, the article claims that **all those** who promote use of marihuana for personal or medical purposes, have blood on their hands. This does not seem logical. What if someone is promoting the use of marihuana for medical purposes only?

If the publisher would like to provide more adequate coverage of the situation, he could have to find approx. 250 thousand articles on the issue (typing for example „cannabis suicide rate” or „cannabis death” into the most popular search engine). He could have used academic publications search engines (such as „Web of Science” etc.) to find scientifically supported research results that we cite in this Letter before Claim.

Under the following link:

[www.se.pl](http://www.se.pl)

and

[http://www.se.pl/wydarzenia/opinie/slawomir-jastrzebowski-komentuje-krew-na-rekach-promotorow-cpunow\\_374298.html](http://www.se.pl/wydarzenia/opinie/slawomir-jastrzebowski-komentuje-krew-na-rekach-promotorow-cpunow_374298.html)

we have found „Super Express” article advert, that in a very defamatory to us way intends to combine some alleged „deaths” with consumption of marihuana. According to Polish editions of "Super Express", only one explanation was provided in the article advert:

Bold title reads:

In Newsweek: Blood on the hands of of drug-addicts promoters

(Original language version: „Sławomir Jastrzębowski: Krew na rękach promotorów ćpunów”)

Last section section ends with bolded letters:

"Why does Polish law does not ban the promotion of drug-addicts and drugs?" and asks, why such organisations are legal in Poland? This paragraph directly concerns the activities of groups that promote for example the use of marihuana to cure cancer, multiple sclerosis and other terminal diseases.

(Original language version: "skoro polskie prawo zakazuje pod groźbą więzienia promowanie faszyzmu czy komunizmu, to czemu nie zakazuje promocji ćpunów i narkotyków? Czemu organizacje jawnie promujące ćpunów są w Polsce legalne?")

The activity of Super Express caused widespread damage to our Community, its artists and personalities. However, main statement of the disputed article advertising an interview- that some death was linked to the usage of marihuana- cannot be supported nor verified by scientific data. According to the articles published in Wall Street Journal, based on a long series of data [1] it seems that exactly the opposite is the case. A more detailed study is available [2].

The issues have been studied by members of our community. We can support our findings with accurate data, also found in publicly available encyclopædias. Marihuana is often used as a powerful medicine and should not cause life-threatening negative side-effects if used properly, for

example: according to the rules of our Bible-based religion, it is as a food ingredient. Bible says about eating plants, not about smoking them (see its „Genesis” chapter). However, given the rising prices of the herb (from PLN 30 to PLN 50- PLN 60 per one single gramme - 0.0353 ounce - in less than a year), no wonder that population chooses other, harmful types of consumption.

It is also widely known that products blackmarketed in Warsaw, Poland, under the common name "marihuana" often contain additions of other products, even chemicals, considered non-Ital (Ital being the term for „kosher” food in the Ras Tafari vocabulary). Some types may not be organic marihuana, and can be genetically modified.

The newspaper, by claiming that following the rites of our community was the direct cause of death, in our opinion fulfilled the criteria of a crime. Hate crimes (also known as bias-motivated crimes) occur when a perpetrator targets a victim because of his or her perceived membership in a certain social group. Examples of such groups include religion identity.

A hate crime is a category used to describe bias-motivated violence. "Hate crime" generally refers to criminal acts that are seen to have been motivated by bias. Observed incidents involved verbal abuse and insults aimed at Claimants' religious sacraments.

### **Consequences to the plaintiffs**

Intended meaning of the term religious abuse used in this Letter Before Claim refers to psychological harm or manipulation. Plaintiffs experienced psychological trauma, harassment and humiliation. Harm was inflicted on a group of people by using teachings or doctrines abusing their religious rites and symbols. This was perpetrated by -at least in part- members of similar faith, and included the use of a position of authority within the Polish commercial media system to inflict such harm.

It was most prevalently directed at children and emotionally vulnerable adults, and motivations behind such abuse vary, but can be either well-intentioned or malicious.

Well-meaning instances of such abuse are often motivated by genuine concern that the targeted person will come to physical or spiritual harm should they engage in a certain behavior or question their beliefs.

The perpetrator uses exaggerated, distorted or even false versions of their teachings or their position of authority to instill intense fear and shame so that victims will comply. Maliciously motivated abuse seeks to manipulate the victim into being compliant with the perpetrator’s selfish wishes.

Even well intentioned religious abuse can have long-term psychological consequences. Causing the victim to be intensely fearful can induce that person to develop a specific phobia about the topic they were warned against, or develop a long-lasting depression.

They may have an unshakable sense of shame that persists even when they have either grown up or left the spiritual group or religious denomination. The person can also be manipulated into avoiding a beneficial action (such as a medical treatment involved with using the sacraments characteristic to the denomination) or to engage in a harmful behavior.

### **Legal background**

The UK Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 says: "A person who uses threatening words or behaviour, or displays any written material which is threatening, is guilty of an offence if he intends

thereby to stir up religious hatred."

## **Our intentions**

In our work settings, the label of religious abuse is a matter of great delicacy. We are prepared to take action when a specific behavior is or was clearly causing harm to the individuals. A financial claim against the Murator S.A. can be started on our behalf by one of our British co- organisations.

Wrongdoings to our community already happened. We do not seek revenge, however, we wish to protect interests of a large group of individuals from various professional and social strata.

Restorative justice (also sometimes called reparative justice) is applied within and outside of our community. It is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of the victims and the offenders, as well as the involved community, instead of satisfying abstract legal principles or punishing the offender.

Victims take an active role in the process, while offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, "to repair the harm they've done—by apologizing, returning stolen money, or community service".[for details see: A New Kind of Criminal Justice", Parade, October 25, 2009, p. 6]

Restorative justice involves both victim and offender and focuses on their personal needs. In addition, it provides help for the offender in order to avoid future offences. It is based on a theory of justice that considers crime and wrongdoing to be an offence against an individual or community, rather than the state.[source: Price, Marty (2000). "Personalizing Crime". Dispute Resolution Magazine 7 (1): 8–11]

Restorative justice that fosters dialogue between victim and offender shows the highest rates of victim satisfaction and offender accountability.

## **We propose:**

### **Victim-offender mediation**

Victim-offender mediation, (VOM, also called victim-offender dialogue, victim-offender conferencing, victim-offender reconciliation, or restorative justice dialogue), is usually a meeting, in the presence of a trained mediator, between groups of victims and offender.

### **Family group conferencing**

Family group conferencing (FGC) has a wider circle of participants than VOM, adding people connected to the primary parties, such as family, friends and professionals. Polish Ras Tafari families, friends and professional groups may attend such conference.

### **Restorative conferencing**

Restorative conferencing (RC) also involves a wider circle of participants than VOM. An RC is a voluntary, structured meeting between offenders, victims and both parties' family and friends, in which they address consequences and restitution. RC is explicitly victim-sensitive.

The conference facilitator arranges the meeting. In some cases, a written statement or a surrogate replaces an unwilling victim. The conference facilitator sticks to a simple script and keeps the conference focused, but intentionally does not testify. The intent is to allow subsequent conferences to succeed without a facilitator.

**Installation of the community restorative board** for Polish Ras Tafari Organisations in Warsaw,

Poland

A community restorative board is typically composed of a small group, prepared by intensive training, who conduct public, face-to-face meetings. Judges may sentence offenders to participate; police may refer them before charging them; or they may engage outside the legal system.

Victims meet with the board and offender, or submit a written statement which is shared with the offender and the board. Board members discuss the nature and impact of the offense with the offender. The discussion continues until they agree on a deadline and specific actions for the offender to take. Subsequently, the offender documents progress in fulfilling the agreement. After the deadline passes, the board submits a compliance report to the court or police, ending the board's involvement.

All above is possible to be organised both physically or virtually, using such modern methods as on-line web 2.0. networks. Community uses 3rd party networks as well as runs its own social web 2.0 services.

### **Final statements**

We want to resolve this issue as amicably as possible, but if Your Newspaper intentionally cause damage to the Polish Ras Tafari Community, its ordinary members and their friends, its artists, managers, writers, designers, sportsment, actors, stunts, journalists, editors (of over 80 media outlets, including a dozen of on-line TV and radio stations), for no legitimate reason, we will be left with no choice but to pursue all available remedies. Please respond to this letter in writing no later than within 14 days of its submission date.

Loveful Heights  
Hallelu Jah

Zielona Góra Ras Tafari Community  
with the approval of Warsaw Ras Tafari Community  
Web-magazine of the Zielona Góra Community: [www.korzenie.zielonogorska.pl](http://www.korzenie.zielonogorska.pl)

Polish address:

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Literature:

[1]

Christopher Shea, "Does Medical Marijuana Reduce Suicides?", published on February 6, 2012, accessed on line on 25.01.2013, link: <http://blogs.wsj.com/ideas-market/2012/02/06/does-medical-marijuana-reduce-suicides/>

[2]

Anderson, D. Mark & Rees, Daniel I. & Sabia, Joseph J., 2012.  
"High on Life? Medical Marijuana Laws and Suicide,"  
IZA Discussion Papers 6280, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

Other scientific articles:

Jan C. van Ours & Jenny Williams, 2011. "Cannabis use and mental health problems," *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., vol. 26(7), pages 1137-1156, November.

van Ours, Jan C. & Williams, Jenny, 2009. "Cannabis Use and Mental Health Problems," CEPR Discussion Papers 7384, C.E.P.R. Discussion Papers.

Ours, J.C. van & Williams, J., 2009. "Cannabis Use and Mental Health Problems," Discussion Paper 2009-60, Tilburg University, Center for Economic Research.

Copies disseminated to:

Warsaw Ras Tafari

Polska Wspólnota Ras Tafari

Wolne Konopie Warszawa

Stowarzyszenie Wolne Konopie

Wrocław Ras Tafari Community

Bydgoszcz Ras Tafari Community

Gorzów Ras Tafari Community

Ras Tafari media outlets