

The Path of Guru Jara – religious society

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RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES BY COOPERATION OF STATE BODIES (POLICE, COURT, MINISTRIES) WITH ANTI-CULT MOVEMENTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Summary of interest for OSCE HDIM: Rule of law - fair-trial - independence of courts and behavior of the state and society towards religious minorities biased by activities of Czech anti-cult movement, according situation experienced 24 years in the Czech Republic. Impact of media on freedom of religion and belief and tolerance towards religious minorities and diversity in society.

Full 72 pages report about anti-cult movements in the Czech Republic, including analysis of anti-cult discourse in Czech media (744 articles in newspapers) is available on request.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, and also in the Czech Republic, new religious movements are persecuted and discriminated systematically according to the 11-step typical scheme disclosed in 2012 by the case study on FECRIS - antisect movement and state neutrality (published in Religion – Staat – Gesellschaft, journal for the study of beliefs and worldviews by Dresden University). This scheme of persecution typical for FECRIS or other anti-cult organizations in the world is also valid for activity of Society of study sects and new religious movements in the Czech Republic. Anti-cult movements primarily use media to manipulate and intimidate public opinion on a minor religious group and exploit governmental bodies for the persecution and discrimination of their targets.

Contemporary Czech Republic is strictly atheist. According to a recent Paw Research Center study in the Czech Republic, Central and Eastern Europe's most secular country - about 7 in 10 Czechs (72%) do not identify with a religious group, while on a separate question, two thirds (66%) say they do not believe in God¹. The Czech Republic is repeatedly quoted as one of the most atheist countries in the world, also according to some other polls². This situation creating specific context of the country, where religious pluralism, OSCE guidelines supporting freedom of religion and belief and UN recommendation about protection of vulnerable minorities, including defined by religion, is not taking in account.

Because representatives of state bodies often do not act neutral, have limited or lacking objective information sources about religious minorities, and are unaware that they are playing an active role in such a scheme of persecution, this pattern of liquidation or at least damage can be very easily effective. Larger traditional organizations also occasionally face some persecution tactics such as police raids and fabricated criminal accusations (for instance, questionable police raid of UOOZ police anti-terrorist force during prayers in Prague mosque in 2014), but their situation is still easier to endure, compared to religious minorities, which are far more vulnerable and practically unprotected.

Any state cannot be neutral, supporting ideas of freedom of religion and belief, promoting religious pluralism and tolerance towards religious minorities without discrimination, when the governmental apparatus officially cooperates with members of anti-cult movement as independent experts on the area of their interest, thus religious minorities, new religious movements and their alleged danger to the society.

¹ Source: Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe - National and religious identities converge in a region once dominated by atheist regimes - Pew Forum (2017). On-line: <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/>

² Source: Map: These are the world's least religious countries, Washington Post (2015). On-line: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/04/14/map-these-are-the-worlds-least-religious-countries/?utm_term=.3864dbaff924

2. THE LEADING ANTI-CULT MOVEMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: THE SOCIETY FOR STUDY OF SECTS AND NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

A Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements (SSSNRM) was founded in 1993, officially as reaction of growing religious pluralism after Velvet revolution for monitoring and preventive action against the deleterious effects of some new religious groups. It was and still is just a civic association, but with a long-term cooperation with the Czech government. The SSSNRM officially just deals with the study of sects – which are understood, by some of their own definitions, as all new religious movements. The mandate for that should be according to the founders their own scientific expertise and experience with religious issues. However, based on their statements and real activities, we can see that the main objective of their interest is to spread long-term religious intolerance and restrict minorities. This behaviour does not observe the rights of freedom of belief. A deep analysis of their argumentations shows considerable doubts of their so-called scientific approach (see further).

This civil society has been repeatedly and heavily criticized for its extremely discriminative discourse by the Czech Helsinki Committee (especially in 1999 and 2002) and by Czech academics from the field of religion (within 2000-2005). Let us look back in time on reflection of SSSNRM in year 1999 from Czech Helsinki Committee in detail, as this alarming summary of cooperation between SSSNRM, media and state authorities is still continuing the same way, 18 years later:

“An image of new religious movements that the public is forming, is unfavorably influenced by some study and educative activities, which unfortunately affect the decision-making of state authorities because of subjectivity of their approaches.

a) The Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements

A separate chapter is represented by activities of The Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements. It's about a civil association which was established as a follow-up to an association of traditional Christian denominations with a designation „Exodos“. This civil association sets itself a main task to inform about sects and new religious movements. Decision making members of this association are Christianly motivated people connected to registered denominations. These experts theologially criticize almost all new religious movements. Because they are aware that the public isn't sensitive to Christian scientific arguments, they use criminal and medical arguments. The main goal is to clarify a danger that arises for individuals who yield to teachings of sects.

In fact this group uses generally existing intolerance to differences in opinion and almost all new acting religious minorities' are marked as sects. Members of this association name themselves as experts on sects' and use a scientific language. But in fact they biasedly emphasize tragic cases of some peripheral religious groups, and declare that all new movements associate artificially together and stigmatize them this way. Their starting point is naturally theological and their true motivation is an attempt to prevent a „distorted“ interpretation of Holy Scripture. This is manifested even in that they connect

groups which worship a "wrong God" with groups which worship Satan, because according to a true Christian both types of teachings come from Satan.

Conclusions of this association are accepted by the media absolutely uncritically and it seems that its activity influences also the registration authorities with which their employees have a close affiliation.

This association is very active in the educational area and organizes regular lectures, in which using its biased point of view, it interprets teachings of particular denominations and new religious groups.

b) Publicizing in the media

The only source of information about new religious movement comes only from The Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements which leads to demonizing and stigmatizing.

Only very rarely there is an article in the media where truly unbiased experts who are occupied with Religious Studies express their views.

c) A criminalization

A report of the police of the Czech Republic processed from materials and consultations with The Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements in 1994 reports that in these sects a psychic disorder is manifested, their members are in fact like mentally ill. They must be treated similarly. Allegedly it is very difficult to leave a sect without consequences on a member, because "he/she has been brainwashed". Just "this danger" should justify a criminalization of new religious movements.

This tendency to criminalize new religious movements is most strikingly manifested in conclusions of The Report about a manifestation of extremist attitudes in the Czech Republic in 1995. This report motivated the establishment of a special department for monitoring extremism, where new religious movements and sects became a subject of monitoring and subsequently got on a list of groups suspected of extremism.

A criminalization of a religious group could manifest itself even in specific approaches of a specialized division of The Police of the Czech Republic. Representatives³ are summoned to pass an explanation without being informed about the reason of a summons. They are interrogated even for several hours. Besides this, data is collected about members of a group, about „their achieved spiritual level“, even about potential contacts with foreign countries. Gained information was – supposedly unofficially – communicated to the press.

It's natural that every society must face a danger of such sects and other groups which can threaten lives of people, their health, morality and other human values. But it must have criteria for an assessment of these phenomenon's through which it is possible to separate

³ „In particular, I mean the organizers of the Dianetic Center (Scientology Church) civic association.“ (this was original note by Atty. Karel Salajka from 1999, however very similar situation happened to the followers of Guru Jara during police investigation in 2010-2012).

really dangerous and damaging manifestations from noble efforts and activities which contribute to a development of spiritual life in its variety and plurality.”

Source: Czech Helsinki Committee: A Report on a State of Human Rights in the Czech Republic in 1998. Fundamental freedoms, chapter Freedom of religion and believe, by Atty. Karel Salajka.⁴ (pp 51 – 52).

As it is clear from history events in 1995, SSSNRM involved establishment of special police department, for monitoring and combating new religious minorities in the country. However, SSSNRM has never been able to clearly define, which minor religion / new religion fits their own sect criteria and which does not as their criteria are constantly changing. Despite declared scientific discourse, for years they are spreading very vague and several definitions, which allows them to embrace to combat all minor religious groups nor any, as needed.

As members of SSSNRM contributed to police alerts on Czech religious movements, it is a not big surprise, that keyperson of SSSNRM Mr. Vojtíšek, is also a court expert specialist on religious extremist and terrorism.

The secret department of UOOZ (anti-terrorist police unit) on combating religious extremism was also involved in questionable investigation of several hundreds of Path of Guru Jara members (in 2010 – 2012) on still officially unclear grounds. Their investigation started searching to find any possible evidence against the PGJ and did not respond to some particular charge as it was supposed by media. Their whole investigation was full of procedural errors and misconducts⁵. Until its abolition in 2016 UOOZ acted also in other questionable investigations with supposed religious extremists, which were finally never proven.

We do not know, how many other police departments involved SSSNRM since 1995 with its discriminative discourse towards new religious groups. There is a chance, that some secret police departments for monitoring “religious extremist danger” and thus monitoring minor religious groups in the Czech Republic according SSSNRM criteria still exist. The number of police decisions, which were influenced by Czech anti-cult rhetoric over 22 years is likely overwhelmingly large but hardly quantifiable, except for some retrospective investigations of the proper committee of Ministry of Interior itself.

What that report of Czech Helsinki Committee in 1999 did not mention was the involvement of anti-cult rhetoric at Czech courts by so-called independent experts on the field. This means not only the most publicly active SSSNMR member and court expert Mr. Vojtíšek. There are several others court experts, who are openly consider themselves as supporters of Czech anti-cult ideas. After years of experiences abroad we can assume, that court experts with biases towards members of religious groups would never be reliable sources of independent and neutral judgment. For instance, in the case of persecution of Jiří Krutina and his wife and her children, the court was taking in account opinions from SSSNMR as valid neutral expertise.

⁴ Source: http://www.helcom.cz/dokumenty/zpravy-SLP/CHV_ZSLP_1998_CZ.pdf

⁵ Some details of questionable actions of UOOZ during their investigation you can see in annexes of PGJ contribution at OSCE HDIM 2017: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/341996?download=true>

We assume, that rights on fair trial can be violated any time if court uses solely the opinions of SSSNMR experts or anti-cult rhetoric.

Reactions to the Czech Helsinki Committee report in 1999 from government is for us unknown. But we do know the reaction of SSSNMR itself. Somewhere around year 2000, the founder of SSSNMR (and it's still very active member) Mr. Ivo Odildo Štampach become also a member of the board of the Czech Helsinki Committee, and become there an expert on the area of freedom of religion and belief. **In annual report on State of Human Rights in the Czech Republic in 2001, Mr. Štampach continued to criticize anti-cult movements, according to the previous stance of CHC:**

“If the legislators consider that a procedure is necessary to prevent the abuse of the position of a registered church or religious society, it can be ensured by law. However, the way this law ensures this is problematic in terms of human rights. The wording of paragraph 5 is legally unclear and easily misused. During its preparation, the influence of the so-called anti-cults can be seen. Authorities deciding on registration or granting of authorization or the court that would review such a decision, would have to turn to unrelated experts. The danger of the impact of anti-cult initiatives on the application of this paragraph is considerable.”

The mentioned paragraph 5 regarding registration and prohibition of some religious groups is actually a core pillar of anti-cult rhetoric and also repeating source of misuse, because it's vague definition (bold selection emphasized):

*“...§ 5 of the Law on Churches and Religious Societies, which sets out the circumstances in which religious groups could not publicly act. In addition to the indisputable criterion according to the introductory paragraph, compliance with the provisions of this paragraph contains in paragraph (c) and (d) a formulation according to which a church or a religious society could not be created and developed which **restricts the personal freedom of persons by using psychological and physical exertion to create dependence that leads to physical, psychological and economic harm to such persons and their family members, harm their social ties, including the reduction of the mental development of minors and the limitation of their right to education**, prevents minors from accepting healthcare appropriate to their health needs or is classified in their entirety or in some parts, as well as the organizational structure of the Church and the religious society, and links to foreign constituents, were part of a church or a religious society outside the territory of the Czech Republic.”*

Source: Czech Helsinki Committee: A Report on a State of Human Rights in the Czech Republic in 2001. Freedom of believe. By Ivan O. Štampach.⁶ (pp 66-67)

However, exactly such claims about minor religious group and especially new religious group are very typical for SSSMNR. It might seem that Mr. Štampach was openly criticized himself, for what he was for years already doing as a founder and active member of SSSMNR. Or, Mr.

⁶ Online: http://www.helcom.cz/dokumenty/zpravy-SLP/CHV_ZSLP_2001_CZ.pdf

Štampach was not able to admit, that – according to his own words – he was *“aimed at suppressing the rights of religious minorities”*.

Since his membership at CHC board, we have not observed any practical or visible activity of the protection of religious minorities from the side of Mr. Štampach up until today (except rare supports of traditional Christians). Not only do we regard such twisted activities unethical for someone publicly proclaiming himself as human rights defender, but also severely diminishing possible and needed protection of religious minorities in the country from hate crimes and hate-speech, resulting from actions of the anti-cult movement he founded.

It was a different person – director of CHC herself – Mrs. Rybova, who in 2015 recognized in case of believers of the Path of Guru Jara several human rights violations.

3. SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SECTS AND NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND ITS BACKGROUND

Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements is a representative of the anti-cult movement in the Czech Republic. Another candidate for representative of the anti-cult is the skeptics club Sysifos, famous for the humiliating prize of "the erratic boulder" for those who are interested in what is not able to be verified by scientific methods. The activity of Sysifos is not far from being able to compete with the destruction of the lives of thousands of believers, the liquidation of minority movements, spreading intolerance and fear against new religions in society of which SSSNRM is responsible for.

Towards the general public and journalists, they claim that their criticism of religious movements and sects is scientific, independent and objective. They prop themselves upon scientific language, but otherwise everything is regarded and evaluated by their dogmatically Christian view of refusing another faith.

„The Society was registered by Ministry of the Interior in 1993, under a former designation „Exodos“ - The Ecumenic Society for Sects´ and New Religious Movements´ Study (hereinafter „Exodos“). The society with this former designation was founded by Zdeněk Vojtíšek and Tomáš Novotný, who plentifully discussed sects´and new religious movement issues, in the process, as we have already mentioned. Their idea was to found a society which would concern religious movements and especially inform the public reliably about a religious sectarianism. Originally, the group „Exodus“ only organized a few conferences, lectures and studies. In the course of time it came up to gradual increase of its activity and so it was necessary to adapt its activity legally. So the organization was registered as a civic association under a current designation: „The Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements“. A civic association doesn´t require its members to be experts in that area. It isn´t about a professional or an academic subject, so any approval committee wasn´t necessary to evaluate a scientific erudition of its members. For an official registration it was sufficient only to pass information about a foundation of the society including approved statutes (by which an activity of The Society as a nonprofit organization was allowed) to Ministry of the Interior.“

(In: Gabriela Pešková, a bachelor´s thesis, University of Pardubice, 2016, About circumstances of an origin of „The Society for the Study of Sects...“)

The chairman of the civic association is a former Roman Catholic priest Ivan Odilo Štampach. Its main spokesman and most active member is doc. Zdeněk Vojtíšek, a clergyman of the Evangelical Church. Other active members include a Roman Catholic priest Aleš Opatrný and a specialist on pastoral therapy in a psychiatric hospital, Prokop Remeš. The other members, who number less than twenty, come from the academic background and are clergymen as well. A large number of new members are recruited by the Society from the university students of theology of doc. Vojtisek's class. They are forced by the school system to do practicum, and the offer by their own teacher to engage in the activities of the SSSNRM becomes attractive. Students of the doctorate are so poorly paid that the reason for joining

the SSSNRM may be to participate in implementation of an activity that is subsidized by the Ministry of Culture, Labor and Social Affairs.

They are even paid for these assessments by the police and the courts as for independent reports which play an important role in judicial decisions. Over the past eight years, they have been directly assigned by ministries to subsidies of 1.65 million Czech crowns, which is approximately 70 000 USD. During stalking, which they call researching, when they encounter a significant group, they report it immediately to the police.

The Ministry of Interior has no official authority to monitor the activities of new religious groups (or/thus sects). **On its website, however, they refer to the expert work which says that the ministry relies in terms of monitoring of new religious groups on the activities of the Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements.** Namely their website states: *"In the Czech Republic there is no separate department or a group specializing on dealing with sects and their potential threats ... The police, on the instructions of the Ministry of Interior or the Police Presidium, only carry out monitoring of a selected group and observe whether any breaches of law are committed. **During consequent investigation of these cases, it is very difficult to blame somebody for committing a crime and proving the suspects guilty because there is a lack of specialists that deal with this issue. Then the suspects are accused of alternative crimes (restriction of personal liberty, extortion, violations of the moral education of youth, etc.)...** The police officers dealing with dangerous sects cooperate with the Ministry of Culture and the Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements, which is, in the long run, engaged in monitoring and watching the alleged sects and new religious movements."* (ZEMAN, R: The role of the police in the fight against racism and xenophobia, Prague, Ministry of the Interior, 2000, p. 15)

Designation to be „a sect“ is thus ensuring religious discrimination, social exclusion and contempt⁷. Sometimes the religious discrimination based on general and specific activities of SSSNRM could turn to serious religious persecution. We brought to the attention of the Minister for Human Rights, Jiri Dienstbier, regarding their biased attitude in September 2015 at our personal meeting. He was intrigued by such a systemic and exclusive cooperation with them; He promised to have their activities investigated. Nevertheless, their leading

⁷*"In the 1996 Annual Report by the Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom to the United Nations Human Rights Commission provides the Rapporteur's opinion on the broad scope of the term religion and the need for equal treatment of all religions, including so called "sects." The Rapporteur first noted the inadequacy of labeling certain belief groups as sects: The term "sect" seems to have a pejorative connotation. A sect is considered to be different from a religion, and thus not entitled to the same protection. This kind of approach is indicative of a propensity to lump things together, to discriminate and to exclude, which is hard to justify and harder still to excuse, so injurious is it to religious freedom.*

Then, the Special Rapporteur explained: "Religions cannot be distinguished from sects on the basis of quantitative considerations saying that a sect, unlike a religion, has a small number of followers. This is in fact not always the case. It runs absolutely counter to the principle of respect and protection of minorities, which is upheld by domestic and international law and morality. Besides, following this line of argument, what are the major religions if not successful sects?" (Patricia Duval - FECRIS and its Affiliates in France. In: Freedom of Religion or Belief Anti-Sect Movements and State Neutrality A Case Study: FECRIS. Religion – Staat – Gesellschaft. (pp 208 – 209). Online: <http://www.hrwf.net/images/reports/2012/2012fecrisbook.pdf>

representative continues to repeat his behaviour, which we consider to be criminal, and contributes to severe religious persecution.

4. DISCLOSING THE SCHEME TO DESTROY RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

*"We should not forget any of those who paid for our present freedom
in one way or another."*

Vaclav Havel

In France, there is an anti-cult movement called FECRIS uniting 25 such movements in Europe. FECRIS hides behind helping with the fight against organizations that allegedly deal with faith and mental manipulation, which is a subjective statement that could also include the traditional established churches. The real aim of the movement is fighting against religious minorities. Anti-cult movements are funded by public institutions, and organizations of individual states cooperate mutually in order to lobby at an international level. The connection of doc. Zdenek Vojtisek with French anticult can be seen for example in the Czech edition of a book of one of the FECRIS representatives for which he wrote an epilogue (Jean-Marie Ahgrall: Sects mechanism. Karolinum. Praha. 1999.)

The scheme of liquidation of religious groups through anti-cult movements is revealed by the study "Religion - Staat - Gesellschaft" which was created by Prof. Dr. Gerhard Besier, / Germany /, Em. Univ.- Prof. Dr. Christian Brunner / Austria /, Prof. Regis Dericquebourg, / France / Patricia Duval / France / Prof. Willy Fautré, / Belgium /, Miroslav Jankovic, / Serbia / and Mag. Dr. iur. Thomas Neger, / Austria /. The study was published in 2012 by the Technical University of Dresden⁸. It contains eleven steps describing a pattern of gradual liquidation of many minority groups across the world.

Described liquidating practices have unfortunately also been for several years applied to us – the followers of Guru Jara. The following are specific examples of how the anti-cult movement in the Czech Republic proceeds against our faithful. It completely corresponds with the procedures disclosed in the aforementioned study and used to some extent also in other cases of religious persecution and discrimination in the Czech Republic.

⁸ Available online at <http://www.hrwf.net/images/reports/2012/2012fecrisbook.pdf>

	Typical scheme of liquidation of religious minorities	Example and description of liquidation in the case of the Path of Guru Jara religious society
1	MONITORING OF A GROUP, LABELLING IT AS DANGEROUS AND MANIPULATIVE	<p>Doc. Zdenek Vojtisek admitted that he has been following the PGJ since the mid-nineties. Because the PGJ was the only ever-growing spiritual community in the Czech Republic, the PGJ got on a blacklist of potentially dangerous sects. Even though they have never done anything illegal and our faith is peaceful and beneficial in general. Already in the first article on Guru Jara in magazine Dingir from 2001, which was founded and is run by the members of SSSNRM, there were pejoratively expressed doubts about his spiritual qualities. His teaching was blackened, his books described as lacking intelligence and it was also suggested that he was likely to be a cheater and therefore it was better to be careful around him and that he could only be followed by immature individuals.</p>
2	COLLECTING TESTIMONIES OF DEFECTORS AND MANIPULATED RELATIVES PRESENTING MEMBERS AS VICTIMS	<p>In 2009 one of the main lecturers at that time decided to destroy the Guru Jara's institute Poetrie for personal reasons and to start her own spiritual institute. First, she stole addresses of all believers and then, along with several other lecturers, began to gossip about the institute Poetrie and Guru Jara trying to persuade the other lecturers to switch and come over to work for her. For that purpose she abused information about the tantric healing rituals, which are, among other things, the contents of teaching and spiritual practice of Guru Jara. Among other things, she organized together with lecturers of her anticipated new institute a public lecture on the dangers of sects, in which the above mentioned Doc. Zdenek Vojtisek actively participated.</p>

3	LABELLING AS A RELIGIOUS SECT (extremist organization)	<p>In 2009 SSSNRM stirred up through the distorted and false statements of the defectors a campaign which created a demonizing media image of Poetrie and Guru Jara and which put a strong negative pressure on our believers in the society. They were portrayed as a manipulative sectarian movement. The situation has been the same up to now.</p>
4	SSSNRM COOPERATION WITH THE POLICE, WHO TAKE SERIOUSLY ITS UNILATERAL CRITICAL INFORMATION FORCING OUR MEMBERS TO RENOUNCE THEIR FAITH	<p>The website of the Ministry of the Interior declares the exclusive cooperation with SSSNRM in the field of religious minorities (assessments, training, ...). This representative of the anti-cult movement in the Czech Republic also provides counselling for the so-called "Victims of sects".</p>
5	THE DEFECTORS ARE CONSIDERED AS SPECIALISTS ON OUR CASE BY THE MEDIA AND THE POLICE. THEY PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH SUPPOSEDLY "WELL-RESEARCHED" OPINIONS OF OUR FAITH.	<p>Since 2009, the media has been repeating the gossip coming from the anti-cult movement and the defectors. The only exception was a brief message on the national television which mentioned also our opinion.</p>
6	INTIMIDATING AND DEGRADING ASSESSMENT OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICES	<p>The easiest way for the anti-cult movement is to apply a sexual motive because spiritual work often includes the cultivation of sexual forces of a human. SSSNRM built their allegations on the tantric healing technique that Guru Jara rarely used. This tantric liturgy was identified as a sectarian deviance or a paid sexual service and thanks to the media thus came into awareness of the society which has been mocking it ever since. Not only is the tantric ritual demoted by the police and subsequently by courts as</p>

		<p>a sexual intercourse, it is even considered a rape.</p>
7	<p>STIGMATIZATION OF THE GROUP IN FRONT OF THE PUBLIC INITIALLY THROUGH GOSSIP IN A MAGAZINE OF THE ANTI-CULT MOVEMENT</p>	<p>Doc. Zdenek Vojtíšek has not only been dishonoring Guru Jara in the magazine <i>Dingir</i>, but also for a long-time and repeatedly in other media sources e.g. <i>MF Dnes</i> described the way Guru Jara thinks of women as being degrading and completely macho. The peak of his slander was his comparison of Guru Jara to Hitler in magazine <i>Legalizace</i>.</p>
8	<p>POLICE RAIDS, SEIZURES OF ITEMS NEEDED FOR OTHER WORK OF THE GROUP</p>	<p>Police burst into the homes of 12 spiritual mentors. During interrogation, without the possibility to call their lawyers, the police used coercion and manipulation; they confiscated their work and religious objects. Some police interviews were not recorded nor signed. The mentors experienced intimidation, threats, violence, abuse of public office, the spread of religious intolerance, violent converting to materialistic faith, and inadequate treatment of the kept personal and religious objects. 12 main mentors were forced to sign confidentiality about the raid under penalty of one to two million CZK. They were threatened with ten-year term of imprisonment for aiding human trafficking in slavery. Armed police officers also illegally confiscated and still have not returned around 6 million CZK intended for building a new monastery.</p>

<p>9</p>	<p>ACCUSATION AND PROSECUTION</p>	<p>The police actively produced and fabricated potential accusations. They called many members of PGJ and discouraged them from our faith. Investigations were conducted entirely one-sidedly, with a clear intent: to find evidence of sexual abuse by a dangerous sectarian. After that, the kangaroo court started. Due to fictitious accusations and false written testimonies, which the former members of religious communities were forced to file, Guru Jara and Barbara Plaskova were sentenced in October 2014 by Regional Court in Zlín to 10 and 9 and a half years in prison. However, the Supreme Court of Appeal annulled in its entirety the judgment of Zlín Court from May 2015. It happened almost at the same time as when Guru Jara (one month after Barbara Plaskova) was detained in his ashram in Philippines. They are detained without any arrest warrant.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>DISCRIMINATION AND PUBLIC INTOLERANCE, FUELED BY A COMBINATION OF FEAR AND CONTEMPT</p>	<p>Religious repression has forced many believers to renounce their faith. Most believers are still forced to conceal their faith. Disclosure would cause great risks regarding their career, existence, relationships and social exclusion. The manipulative, false and degrading media campaign, which was started by SSSNRM, prevents us from spreading faith, which many of us see as our mission and sense of life.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>PUBLIC FIGURES WHO DISAGREE WITH THE HUNT FOR SECTS, DO NOT WANT TO FIGHT FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. THEY ARE AFRAID THAT THEY WILL BE SUSPECTED OF SYMPATHIZING WITH THE MINORITY</p>	<p>Reactions of Czech senators are a good example of how the anti-cult movement managed to sow fear. Members of the PGJ contacted all 81 senators. They refused, however, to stand up for us in public in any way on the grounds that it would mean a media and political suicide for them because the media image of Guru Jara and our believers in the Czech Republic is highly negative in general. The media play a big role throughout the whole scheme since</p>

		they are destroying our good reputation in the eyes of the public and sowing fear.
Effect	<p>After these eleven steps there is a trial that lasts long enough to make believers that were not diffused by the fabricated campaign, invest all their resources in lawyers.</p> <p>After that they are so decimated that they have no powers to pursue flourishing of their faith and the group itself, and to correct their media image. So, even if the main leaders are eventually cleared of charges, the objective has been achieved: The religious group has been dissolved.</p>	<p>PGJ has been intensely focusing on the liberation of Guru Jara and Barbora Plaskova since May 2015. The PGJ society's spiritual leaders are detained in a detention center in the Philippines. Barbora Plaskova's passport was arbitrarily revoked and seized by the Czech Republic. There has been attempted kidnapping of Guru Jara by the Czech Republic during the asylum proceedings.</p> <p>How long will PGJ members be able to face and withstand such religious persecution, defend their purity and invest their resources to remedy the consequences of the fabricated process?</p>

PERSECUTED CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



5. PERSECUTED AND DISCRIMINATED CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, DAMAGED BY ANTI-CULT MOVEMENT COOPERATING WITH GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

Name: PATH OF GURU JARA (Poetrie 2000-2008)

Philosophical line: Ancient Egyptian Mysticism, Tantra, Early Christianity, Zen Buddhism, Taoism

Characteristic: Meditation, Universal energy, Samadhi, prayers, rituals, pilgrimages, Spiritual Trekking

Founder: Guru Jara born in 1971 in the Czech Republic as Jaroslav Dobes

Date and place of Establishment: 1996 in the Czech Republic, registered in the USA in 2016 and in Philippines in 2016

Branches abroad: churches in the USA, Philippines, Japan and many believers all over the world

Branches in the Czech Republic: 7 cities (Prague, Brno, Olomouc, Zlín, Liberec, Opava, Mladá Boleslav)

Actual size: approx 3500 by 2006, since anti-cult targeted this movement with governmental bodies and media, about 450 followers nowadays

Briefly about the group: The followers of Guru Jara believe in universal energy coming from a supreme source, in spiritual meaning and uniqueness and importance of every human life on the Earth, and in the interconnection of the body, soul and human life in microcosm and macrocosm. Within the tantra teachings they believe in the spiritual equality of women and men and in the sacrament of their sexual union, maithuna, where maithuna and cultivation of the sexual energy is a crucial part of spiritual and personal growth.

The main motto of The Path of Guru Jara is: *"Meaning of life is to find meaning of your life."* Teachings emphasize individual freedom but awareness of responsibility for your decisions and actions. Freedom should always be guided by love - to oneself, to the other beings and to the God.

Example of ANTI-CULT slander and manipulation by Z. Vojtíšek: *"Adolf Hitler was quite a zero who became a totally charismatic personality. There are also several examples in politics where average economists have become directors of the globe. These are general rules. Sometimes a charismatic relationship, as with Guru Jara or Hitler, comes in the form of being dangerous."*



8. 9. 2014, Magazine Legalization, I it is good to not have any illusions about themselves.

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT: After being identified by the Society for the Study of the Sect and New Religious Movements as the fastest growing religious society in the Czech Republic in 2000, a gradual pressure (regular slandering media attacks, burning down of the monasteries, physical attacks on Guru Jara) began. In 2009, assoc. prof. Vojtíšek joined with the renegades who wanted to tunnel the movement and launched a media campaign defamation of Guru Jara, his spiritual institute and loyal students. In 2010, police raids took place on 13 mentors of the religious society. Everything culminated with a fabricated case of allegations of rape and sentences of 10 years of jail for Guru Jara and 9.5 years for his colleague

Barbora Plášková. Despite the fact that the court annulled the judgment in its entirety, they both have been for more than two years in detention custody in the Philippines, where Czech embassy persecuted them. Dobes and Plaskova asked in Philippines for religious asylum. While the religious community in the USA and the Philippines was registered, the Czech Republic refused to register the PGJ due to the assessment of the head of the anti-cult movement.

Name: THE PATH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

(Friends of Jiri Vacek, Satguru)

Philosophical line: Seeking and studying our real Ourselves, the Christ, atman. The path of self-knowledge is based on the teaching and spreading of Šrí Ramana Mahářiši, known as Átmavičára.

Characteristic: public common meditations, daily personal endeavor of every seeker and keeping in spiritual level during every day activities.

International Founder: it is based on teaching of Šrí Ramana Mahářiši

Czech founder: Ing. Jiri Vacek, Czech mystic, writer and translator of spiritual literature. He is a yoga teacher, mystic and non-dual philosopher – advaita.

Branch in the Czech Republic: total 3, they call them “places of public meditations” – Prague, Olomouc, Jablunkov.

Briefly about the group: It is an informal, unorganized group of people seeking the meaning of life, knowledge of themselves and God. For this reason, they practice alone, and also gather together to achieve the chosen aim. The group shares the view that everyone has the right to full religious freedom and to their personal conviction and freely choose and implement it. They believe in the equality of all people in front of God, whether they are believers or not, without distinction of religion, gender, nationality, etc. Spiritual seekers who want to live their path live it especially from their home, and if they want, they come to a common gathering. Public meditations take place in joint silence focusing on the inside.



Example of article of ANTI-CULT: Internet report for the Fund of Endangered children:

„About organization structure of religious movement Satguru in the Czech Republic, their members are bound with total loyalty to the leader of the movement, to Mr. Vacek (the grandfather of children), who is perceived as the only one and unique. It is about his total exclusivity. Movement requires great conformance, own opinion is not accepted. It is also an exclusive movement, all other groups are considered to be inferior. Disloyalty is equal to being the enemy.“

Link:

http://www.jirivacek.cz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4367&Itemid=76

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT: Based on the internet statement of the Society for the study of sects and new religious movements, represented by doc. Zdenek Vojtisek, when addressing the spiritual practice of Mr. Jiri Vacek (grandfather), the Fund of children in danger used this statement during litigation concerning the granddaughter of Mr.

Vacek (daughter of Eva Krutinova) and cooperating with OSPOD (state office for children protection). It was about an investigation of the family of Mr. Jiri and Eva Krutinova who were threatened that their underage daughter would be taken out from the family only because they were going to meditate to yogi, Mr. Jiri Vacek. Mr. Prokop Remes, a leading figure of the Czech anti-cult movement, in psychiatric hospital also wrote a detailed report about them. Within a compulsory research and humiliating meeting to create the report, Mr. Remes advised Mr. Krutina against his religion and also against the relationship with a daughter of Jiri Krutina, who he openly slandered.

Name: THE GRAIL MOVEMENT

(The Foundation of the Grail Movement)

Philosophical line: the life philosophy of purity and morality, God

Characteristic: Principles of creation, gravity, an attraction of a reverse effect, Grail

International Founder: founded by co-workers of German writer Oskar Ernst Bernhardt (spiritual name - Abd-ru-Shin). Who was born in 1875 and in 1926 published a book In the Light of Truth – The Grail Message.

Date and place of founding: 1927

Date of founding in the Czech Republic: The movement arise in 1932, then it was prohibited by totalitarian regimes, it was officially reestablished in 1990.

Branches abroad: it is accessible in more than 90 countries, an international central is in Austria.

Branches in the Czech Republic: a central is in Brno, altogether there are 8 centers. They didn't make a request for a registration, they function as a foundation financed with voluntary contributions and gifts of people supporting ideas of the Grail message.

Actual size: about 1400 people

Briefly about the group: The Grail movement follows a community the Grail message, which was created before Second World War in Austria around a writer Abd-ru-Shin. He oneself was several times accused by the Catholic Church of manipulation of his followers, all accusations were disproved in court. He was imprisoned during the war (he died in consequence of the imprisonment) and his religious society was dissolved. His wife reestablished it after the war. The Grail movement is an international free association of people who want to live according to the Grail Message, which has already been translated into 17 languages. He book describes three principles in which people live and which they should know (a principle of gravity, an attraction of a homogenous and reverse effect) and explains how they should behave to live according to God's will. The members of the Grail movement collectively worship God, they organize lectures, seminars and events for children, they publish books. They have temples in the Czech Republic (the biggest is in Karviná in the northern Moravia). In tabernacles of Light are held regular Sunday's public worships and three times a year celebrations of the Grail only for believers.



Example of an article of ANTI-CULT: „According to the police, supporters of a sect, as is for example the Grail movement, could be engaged in the case. This sect is characterized by secretiveness and its members brushed with the law in the past because they didn't send children to school. It is an association, in that strict punishments of children could be a regular norm and lead to their absolute obedience. It's worships aren't public and a part of members are preparing for the end of the world. Members of the Grail movement have already brushed with the law. The movement is affected by twelve year-old scandal around Jan Ditrich Dvorský known under a nickname Imanuel Parsifal. He founded a branch of the movement with a designation „Imanuelites“.“

19. 5. 2007, MF Dnes, „the Kuřim case“

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT: In 2007 the Grail movement was defamed in connection with the “Kuřim case” concerning child abuse. The media lies caused aggressive hatred of the public to all members of the Grail movement, that resulted in diversion from the faith of some of them. Despite the fact, in 2010 the Grail movement won a legal action against the newspaper that consequently had to publish an apology then, a reputation of the Grail movement is irretrievably socially impaired. Hundreds of people couldn't have lived their faith fully for years.

Name: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Philosophical line: Christianity

Characteristic: Jehova's God, Bible, Jesus, The Kingdom of God, the Saving of Sin, the Heaven, the Salvation, the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), the Watchtower

International Founder: Jehovah's Witnesses consider their founder Jesus. Officially beginning is associated with Charles Taze Russell (the first publisher of the Watchtower)

Date and place of founding: end of 19th century, USA

Czech founder: 1916 – the first place and regular gathering in Most; 1923 – Antonín Gleissner (a glassblower)

Date of founding in the Czech Republic: 1923

(established 1st association of serious Bible Students), August 1938 – forbidden all gatherings; after the end of the war there was request for renewal in 1945, in 1948 JW activities were stopped around the whole Czechoslovakia

Registration in the Czech Republic: 1st September 1993 under the name of a religious society of Jehovah's Witnesses

Present responsible person in the Czech Republic: Chairman of the society committee – Peter Hamadej

Branches abroad: Yes, around the world

Branches in the Czech Republic: 6 (2x Prague, Celakovice, Chomutov, Karlovy Vary, Mlada Boleslav)

Actual size: around the world: 8 340 982 in 240 countries. In the Czech Republic 13 069 people



Briefly about the group: „We come from hundreds of ethnic and language groups. We are united by our common aims. Above all, we worship the God of Jehovah who is the author of the Bible and the creator of all things. We also struggle to imitate Jesus Christ and proudly claim to be Christians. Each of us regularly spend time helping people learn about the Bible and God's Kingdom. Because we give testimony to Jehovah and his kingdom, we are known as Jehovah's Witnesses.”

Example of an article of ANTI-CULT: „To label a group with a word sect I would dare in about three dozen of cases, out of which some of them concern a very small number of people. Naming some of them has its own risks - firstly, because we should always keep a hope for their positive, "non-sectarian" development, partly because labeling or scandalizing them may be radicalizing them. Even though: Jehovah's Witnesses still need to be considered as a sect, the prototype of the modern sect is the Church of Scientology, the notorious Hindu innovation is, for example, the Sri Chinmoy movement, even if the respected Hare Krsna movement is not without problems, the prediction of planetary disasters and evacuation to Jupiter, in recent years a group of contacts with aliens has been drawing attention to themselves, etc.“

11.04.2001, Rovnost, Mutace Radce, The sect more often deprive its supporter of free decision-making and relationships with surroundings.

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT:

In 1999 Vaclav Vrba, a director of elementary school was dismissed for his membership of Jehovah's Witnesses. Both city council and pupils' parents were terrified of the previous media campaign of the Society for the study of sects and new religious movements, spreading intolerance against Jehovah's Witnesses. Mr. Vojtisek as an ex-member of Jehovah's Witnesses, stood hardly up against them and as a forensic expert even proposed removing children from their parents because of their affiliation to Jehovah's Witnesses.

Name: CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

(Dianetika, Bussiness Success, Bernhard Schmitt)

Philosophy line: alternative religion founded on the beliefs of the american writer, L.R. Hubbard

Characteristic: self-teachings about the immortal character of the spirit, faith in a higher power, scientific approach to the spirit

International Founder: Lafayette Ronald Hubbard (13 March 1911 in Tild – 24 January 1986)

Date and place of founding: 1954, USA, California

Branches abroad: Their book, „Dianetics, modern science about spiritual health“ is available in 125,000 libraries in over 180 countries. The headquarters of the international management is in Los Angeles. Celebrity members include Tom Cruise, John Travolta, Priscilla Presley

Current chairman: David Miscavige

Actual size: about 400 000 people



Branches in the Czech Republic: In CZ it did not obtain the status of a religious society, it exists as a non-for-profit organization, operates Dianetic centers and the public association Say no to drugs – say yes to life.

Briefly about the group: Acts as a non-profit organization benefiting the public. It engages in the the areas of studies, management and communication. It devotes itself to areas of education courses in large corporations and educational centers. The Scientology doctrine says that it is possible to localize non-optimal behavior of people and with the help of special techniques (dianetics), the discrepancy which complicate otherwise hidden abilities of a person can be removed. Disciples of Dianetics believe that a person is in essence good and can reach original cleanliness through gradual spiritual cleansing, a part of which includes recalling past experiences and analyzing all past feelings under the leadership of a so-called auditor (trained worker of the center). The mind, which stores life's situations records also painful and unpleasant moments – Engramy. To localize and dissolve these, an E-metre machine is used. A person who is no longer influenced by such painful experiences and has the information about them in his analytic (conscious) mind, reaches the a *clear* state through the help of auditing, a technique of questioning helped by the aforementioned E-meter. They are also very involved in the education against drugs in the Czech Republic.

Example of an article of ANTI-CULT: *„According to his words of Oxford text, begins the first masage of scientologists. The aim of the test isn't to record your abilities, but to make you feel neglected. Instil in you that you could be successful, but instead you are a burned out, useless wreck. That is why you order special courses, that should get you out of the worst. And this is where money comes into play. You start with course for a few hundred (such a a communications course), others cost thousands and prices keep rising. „Indeed it is scamming money, but people are so manipulated that they don't event know about it,“ says PhDr. Zdeněk Vojtíšek. In reality we are taking about brainwashing. After a while you walk out of the audit thinking that everyone around you are nasty people who want to harm you. You lose your loved ones and are left with only scientology.“*

19. 11. 1998, Večerník Praha, A sect bared her teeth.

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT: Due to the persecution of the anti-cult movement, which has lasted for over 20 years, the Scientology Church sees as the biggest negative impact the lack of people, both believers and active assistants, translators and churchmen. Many times the Church has been the target of media slanders, spreading intolerance and discouraging co-operation with it, which stopped the full life of faith and further evangelization. The association of the anti-cult movement SSSNRM, headed by Doc. Zdenek Vojtisek with media also harmed Scientology Church. The SSSNRM always grabbed the leaving members and launched a slandering campaign that discouraged other people who were interested in this belief, so at this moment there are not enough believers to apply for a registration as a religious society and they only act as civic associations and non-profit organizations.

Name: HARE KRISHNA

(International organization for the awareness of Krishna, The Hare Krishna Movement)

Philosophy line: Hinduism, Bhagavadgíta, Vedas

International Founder: A. C. Bhaktivédánta Svámí Prabhupáda

Date and place of founding: 1966, USA

Date of founding in the Czech Republic: date of registration 21st November 2002, believers existed before the year 1989

Present responsible person in the Czech Republic:

Antonín Valer, Václav Lichtág, Aleš Junga, Nenad Nejkov

Branches abroad: world-wide, (USA, Great Britain, Ukraine, Russia and India)

Branches in the Czech Republic: 8

Actual size: In Czech around 500 core members and thousands of sympathizers



Briefly about the group: The learnings come from religious texts from India, in particular from Prabhupad's translation of the Bhagavada. A member of the Hare Krishna movement is led to lead a simple, asthetic life. A significant part of the sadhana (daily journey to perfection) is a vegetarian diet. This simple way of life should be complemented by a spiritual recognition of and getting closer to Krishna, mainly through singing mahamantra, through which one frees one's mind from attachment to material indulgences. Believers abide by four principles, which mandate vegetarianism, forbid narcotic substances, gambling, sex outside of marriage and intention to procreate. Those who do not abide by these principles or do not satisfy the required number of mahamantras, can practice according to their abilities even outside of the community. In practice, devotion to Krishna is mostly reflected in the devotion to a spiritual teacher. Vedan literature explains that it is the spiritual teacher who can lead a disciple to his awakening of spiritual enlightenment and realization of true spiritual identity, in other words recognition that he is a eternal spirit and that the body is merely a transient dress. Enlightenment depends primarily on his honesty, but also on his karma (the burden of bad or good deeds), which he has collected in this or previous lives.

Example of an article of ANTI-CULT: *"Devotees then wear a string of 108 beads and they recite mahamantra once for each one of the beads. They repeat then the whole cycle at least 16 times a day, a total of 1728 times. How would Jesus like it who says we should not be vain repetitions as the heathen? (Mt 6,7)"*

Tomas Novotny: They are coming, Published by Oliva, 1993, page 3

„Possible danger: A high number of repetitions of mahamantra and one-sided focus on religious worship is sometimes regarded as endangering the psychic balance of the believers. An isolated life in communities seems to be problematic in particular for the children of the believers, most of whom do not visit a regular school.“

Zděněk Vojtíšek, Encyclopedia of Religious Directions in the Czech Republic. Praha: Portál, 2004. p. 327

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT: In the year 1991, the SSSNRM considered Hare Krishna as a sect, they spread hatred and fear of new or non-christian religious movements through putting everyone in the same bucket, manipulation of the public perception, ignoring real scientific opinions and referring to international colleagues from the Anticult. Due to the actions of Vojtisek and Remes, many members either walked away from the communal life and faith (SSSNRM advised the parents of believers their kidnapping and helped convert to materialism or christianity), or they parted ways with their parents, whom the picture portrayed by the media convicted to be worried about them and hate the Hare Krishna movement.

Name: PETR CHOBOT

(United curative powers)

Philosophical line: shamanism, neoshamanism, karpay

Characteristic: Meditation, Indian herbal medicine, global meditation to avert conflicts in the world, protecting the Amazon rainforest

Founder: Petr Chobot

Briefly about him: Born in 1967, he studied neurology and brain biology. For twenty years he has focused on changes in human life and body through changes in consciousness and biofield. He is actively involved in Indian phytotherapy. He connects techniques of Andean and Amazonian shamans with the findings of his study visits in the Philippines and Brazil. He actively struggles to preserve the biodiversity of the Amazon and to preserve the culture of its indigenous peoples. In 2009 he founded the "United curative powers," as a counterpart to destructive efforts on planet Earth. It is not an organization, but a global meditation, about spontaneous remote interconnection of individuals at the level of mind energy. He organizes dozens of lectures, meditations and healing trips annually in the Czech Republic as well as in Europe. Each year he leads several self-knowledge, healing expeditions to energetically strong places in Peru to learn the shamanic technique on one's own.



Example of an article of ANTI-CULT: „*Michaela and Machacek went on a "healing meditation" at the end of October with the shaman Don Sergio and Peter Chobot. This man was sent by court to the psychiatric hospital in Bohnice, after poisoning thirty-two people at his session entitled The Liberating Autohypnosis of the Forest Magicians in the Academy of the Physical Education and Sports of the Charles University in 2001.*

Nowadays, Chobot is organizing real meditations again, and besides treating by "energies from the highest cosmic source capable of removing all the negative", he sells various herbal blends from South America over the Internet. "Today without blinking eye he continues, which is extremely irresponsible. His activity, which was once proved dangerous, should be limited," says Zdeněk Vojtíšek, a sect specialist and head of the Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements.

MF DNES, however, found that at least two other people had died of unnatural deaths in addition to Michaela, who believed shamanic cleansing by ayahuasca. A young man hanged

himself unexpectedly a year ago and a middle-aged woman jumped under the train. Another ended up in a psychiatric ward."

17. 12. 2016, MF DNES, zpravy.iDNES.cz, Václav Janouš: They believed in the teachings of shamans and drank "cleansing" drink. Later they died strangely

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT: To attack his work was used the event that occurred during his lecture on Autohypnosis of forest magicians in 2001 in Prague, at which the participants drank tea from the South American herb. Due to confusion in collecting herbs, three dozen of participants were hospitalized with nausea. Based on this incident, Chobot was detained and accused of illicit possession of narcotics and psychotropic substances and of general threats. He was imprisoned for several months, and then the court imposed a protective treatment in a psychiatric hospital because the investigators assessed that he was not criminally responsible at the time of the lecture. The forensic expert wrote about him: "His idealism reaches beyond the limits of mental health." He was placed in a psychiatric hospital in Bohnice where, after a few months, this regime was changed to attendance treatment only. The goal of the anti-cult was fulfilled, Petr Chobot was discredited and his followers and believers discouraged, scattered. When he is now trying to fulfill his mission again, Vojtíšek spreads the fear of him and his spiritual leadership again.

Names: YOGA IN DAILY LIFE

(Czech Association „Yoga in Daily Life“)

Philosophical line: vedas, upanishad, 4 yoga paths (karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga)

Characteristic: prana, mantra, meditation, chakras, vegetarianism, development of world peace, humanitarian aid, tolerance between religions, cultures and nations

International Founder: Višvaguru Sri Swami Mahesvarananda (born August 15, 1945).

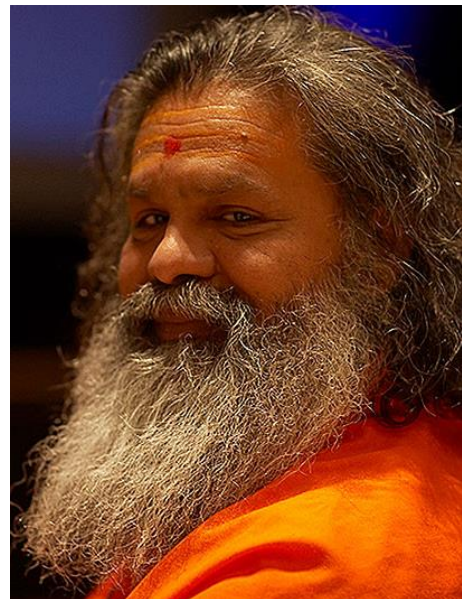
The Sri Díp Madhavananda Ashram „Yoga in Daily Life“, an international society, is a worldwide non-profit humanitarian organization with the status of a consultant of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)

Date and place of founding: Višvaguru Mahéšvaránanda arrived in Europe in 1970. He created a system of yoga for a modern man, which links up ancient yoga teachings to discoveries of science. Since 1973, he has gradually established a lot of societies „Yoga in daily life“ around the world.

Registration in the Czech Republic: The Czech Association “Yoga in Daily Life” was founded in 1995

Branches abroad: A similar practice of Yoga in daily life is in dozens of countries around the world (center in Austria).

Branches in the Czech Republic: 53 independent branches, smaller groups in towns and municipalities + all yoga teachers of this system in the Czech Republic. These centers are nonprofit organizations designated as Yoga in Daily Life, z.s.



Briefly about the group: The Czech Association „Yoga in Daily Life“ is a non-profit organization that primarily focuses on educational, physical, methodical and promotional activities within the system „Yoga in daily life“. It enables the general public - regardless of age, nationality, religion, social status or health - to use this system that cultivates human health in the physical, mental, social and spiritual world. The Association organizes conferences to learn about the long-term results and experience of using Yoga in daily life in health, rehabilitation and education. The headquarter of the Association is in Střilky in Morava in Maháprabhudíp ashram. It is the nationwide center of „Yoga in daily life. The majority of activities, such as spiritual seminars led personally by Sri Swami Maheshvarananda take place here. In 2011, the image of Yoga in Daily Life in EU was damaged by allegation from sexual exploitation of Sri Swami Maheshvarananda, unfounded but widely medialized with very similarly scheme typical for FECRIS and anti-cult movements, mentioned above.

Example of an article of ANTI-CULT: *"Opportunity makes a thief, says a wise proverb. The deeply rooted consciousness of a considerable part of the Czech public about yoga as a system of physical exercises without religious content became an opportunity for Swami mahesvarananda's disciples. They succumbed to its temptation. "Yoga in daily life" represents a unambiguous religious direction, centered on one leader personality. The paths by which yoga gradually arrive in education clearly mean violation of the principle of religious neutrality of education. The amount and interdependence of these paths almost excludes the possibility that violations of this principle can be unintentional or unconscious."*

Dingir 024 (4/2002) – Slyness with yoga (Recruitment Games Between Physical Exercise and Religion), p. 21, author: Zdeněk Vojtíšek

Example of impact of the activities of ANTI-CULT: Due to the lobbying of the Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements, the Slovak Minister of Education, Mr. Ftáčnik, stopped a joint project with "Yoga in daily life" to teach yoga at schools. The spread of fear and intolerance against them, caused by Zdeněk Vojtíšek, has foiled the efforts to introduce yoga in schools also in the Czech Republic. At that time the anti-cult movement has discouraged hundreds of adherents of the society "Yoga in daily life".

Full description of all groups targeted by SSSNMR in the Czech Republic, including detailed analysis of anti-cult discriminative and irrational discourse in Czech media (744 articles in newspapers) and critique of SSSNMR by several Czech academics is available on request.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF SSSNRM IN THE CZECH MEDIA

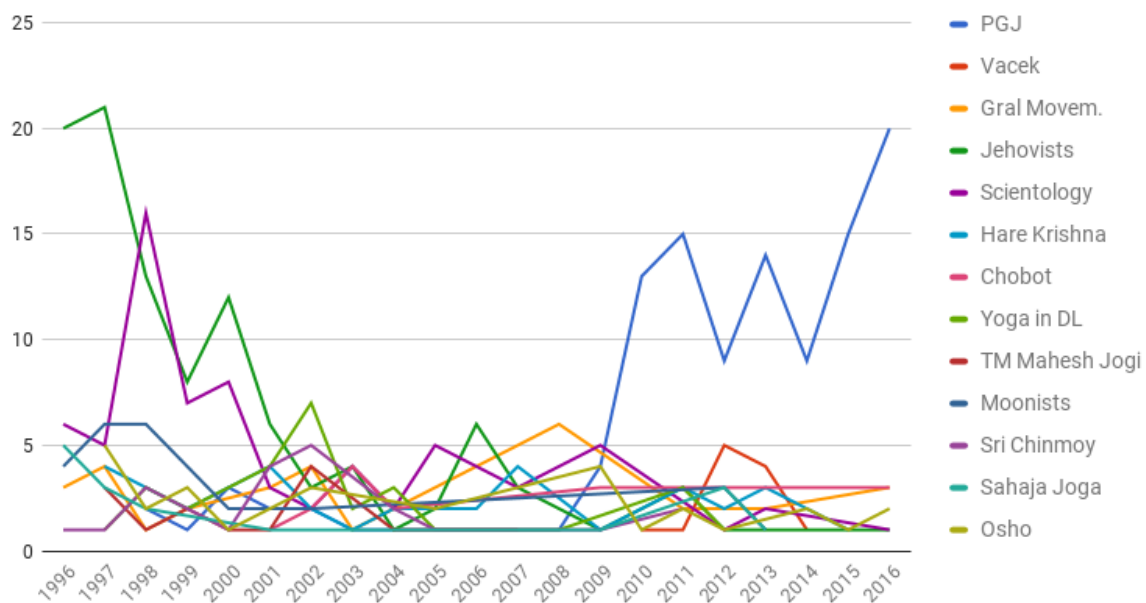
"The history teaches that democracy without values is easy to change in an obvious and camouflage totality."

Pope John Paul II.

Articles statistics in Czech media

We have researched the articles of the SSSNRM members or mentioned their attitude of discrimination of new religious movements. We relied mostly on a list of articles from the most respected printed periodicals, online newspapers, television and radio stations archived in the AnnoPress. We have found **744 articles** or parts of interviews intentionally creating a **negative image of new religious movements over the last 21 years.**

Articles in periodics 1996-2016

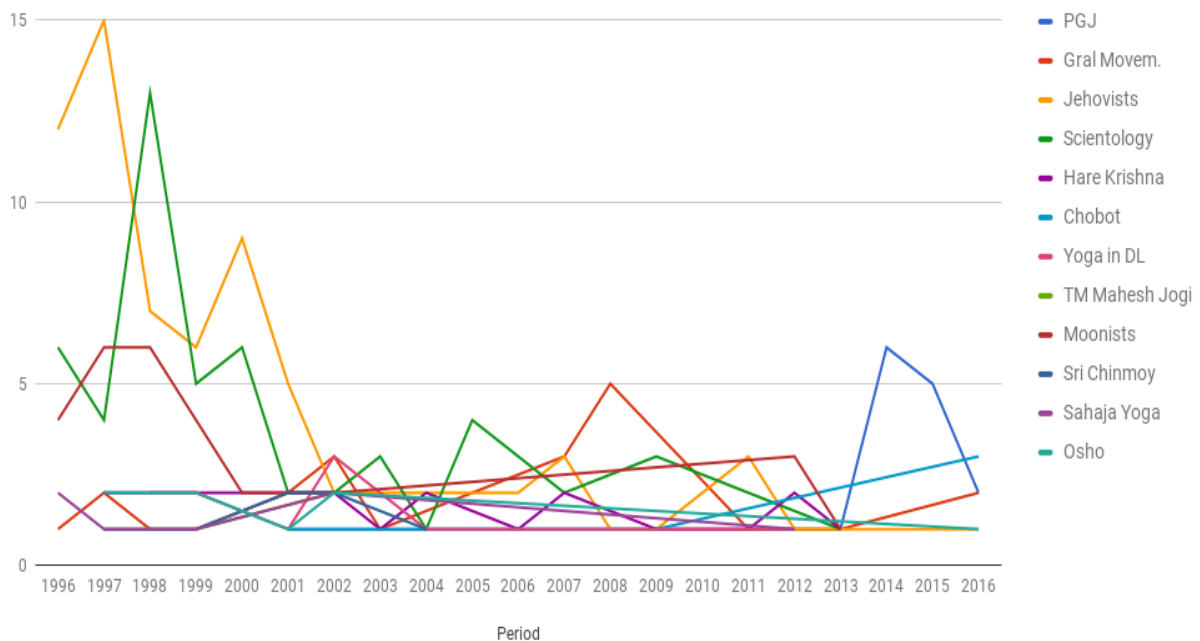


A Graph of persecute media expressions of anti-cults to religious minorities

It seems that the trends towards discriminatory statements and the slanders of new movements generally slightly decreases. It is that after the expansion of the new religious movements after the revolution in 1989, the propaganda of the anti-cult and its connection with the state forces had ensured their dispersal or at least the minimization of the base of the believers, and thus they considered them not as dangerous and competing with the Christianity of which almost all members of the SSSNRM are spiritual. Unfortunately, it is not possible to obtain accurate numbers of the number of believers of the most persecuted religious groups, and thus to show the causal connection also statistically. From interviews

with major representatives of the societies, we are convinced that the time-out of the believers followed the waves of anti-cult pressure.

The only new religious movement, to which discriminatory articles still go in the great is Path of Guru Jara. It has been going through the biggest media discriminatory pressure in the last few years and because of this, the biggest persecution.



Graph of persecute media expressions of doc. Vojtisek to religious minorities

We have also paid attention to articles that doc. Vojtisek had written only recognized media or where he was he was quoted with his discriminatory remark to address the new religious movements. The way how doc. Vojtisek negatively wrote about new movements between 1990 and 2002 was simple, in the style of tabloid press. The anti-cult movement is therefore very easy and relatively briefly to pay attention to the persecuted group, and the press will do the rest of work for them. Since 2002 there has been a well-seen tendency to focus more on the creation of professional academic texts, from which subsequently draw others.

Another interesting finding of the analysis is the effort of the SSSNRM to advocate and protect so-called "victims of sects". From many cases, it is clear that the Society for study of sects will make the victims from the apostates. Sometimes, these former members have more intention to start their own version of the movement from which they have mostly left because of their unfulfilled ambitions. **In the second graph it is possible to see articles of only one member of SSSNRM - doc. Vojtisek. He is the most active spokesman of the anti-cult who is responsible for a most of the discriminatory statements in media. Mr. Stampach (as their others active members of SSSNRM) are more persons "in background".**

As seen from the above data, the greatest activity reached on public media Zdeněk Vojtíšek was in the years 1996 - 2002. In this period was adopted so-called the two-stage model of registration of religious communities following the example of Austria, where the possibility

of registration of minority religious movements ensured greater respect and protection of the rights of believers. At this time also Zdeněk Vojtíšek has begun to profile more as an expert on sects and religious extremism, gradually began to cooperate with the police and courts directly and officially.

LAWS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC THAT VIOLATE MEMBERS OF SSSNRM BY THEIR STATEMENTS

Members of the Czech anti-cult in articles violate freedom of religion defined by Czech constitutions and several other laws. Here are examples of broken paragraphs always with some of those hundreds of discriminatory articles that fulfill the crimes. Analyses of hate crime and hate speech including in public articles of SSSNRM need special examination.

Articles of the SSSNRM violate the law § 206 TZ – slander

In the civil law, it is a violation of the protection of personality according to § 81 (2) of the Civil Code. Many people have turned away from the faith on their basis, and the number of opponents of the sects has also risen.

8. 9. 2014, Magazine Legalizace, Zdenek Vojtisek – It is good not to have illusions about ourselves.

“It is very common for charismatic personalities to arise from total zeros. Adolf Hitler was total zero, from which he became a total charismatic personality. Occasionally, the charismatic relationship, such as at Guru Jara or Hitler, takes such forms that it is dangerous.”

15. 9. 1999, Journal of Jablonec, Regional Diaries - Liberec and Usti Region, Companies like Amway are said to have something in common with the sect.

“On the other hand, however, I am well aware of the case of Imanuel Parsifal, who was at the head of the Grail Message Sect, and the police were also interested in him,” adds Vojtisek. Many people see great danger in Scientology, which is popular above all overseas. “Religious elements can be found in some business firms like Herbalife or Amway, and we also study them from a religious point of view,” concluded Vojtisek.

Dingir (03/2003), The Hindu guru gave medals for raising the world in the Senate

“According to the Christian movement, Chinmoy passes off his fake as peaceful, in real he promotes Eastern religious cults. Identical opinion has already been presented by the Society for study of sects and new religious movements, according to it this guru is the subject of a cult of personality and manipulates with his students. According to religionists, he succeeds to make impression of his activities to be of world importance through the successful use of the influence of famous personalities with whom he takes pictures. The Hindus themselves think Chinmoy is a commercialized renegade.”

1. 3. 1997, Blesk, Nationwide diaries, People are afraid of unresolved problems.

"Jehovah's Witnesses are trying to influence other defenseless people in a way that is similar to extortion. "Family" is often associated with sexual abuse of children and the acquisition of new male members through prostitution."

Articles of the SSSNRM violate the law §355 TZ - defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other group of persons

The fact of this paragraph explicitly also mentions a "group of persons for their religion".

8.11.1996, newspaper Lidove noviny, Scientologists are going to companies

"They contact managers who, after completing more courses, during which they say also various weaknesses, may become manipulable." said to LN Zdenek Vojtisek, considering Scientology as a psycho-cult. "This way, Scientologists can gain economic and political power, which is probably the main reason for the current campaign against them in Germany," added Vojtisek. According to him the Hubbard's technologies promises to people improving mental capabilities but in real they injure mental health."

16. 7. 1997, newspaper Lidove noviny, Jehovah's Witnesses only help their own people

"It is a super-total group with a huge temptation of abuse of power and with a great risk of psychological disintegration as a result of indulging a variety of psycho-technics. On the other hand, sects represent the primary degree of spirituality. It is better to be a mormon than an alcoholic; it is better to be Jehovah's Witness than a murderer.", proclaims Remes.

17.12.2001, ČT1, Facts, Blood and Bible.

"Prokop Remes, Psychiatric hospital in Bohnice: The joy of being among them, and the horror of possibility to get out and actually back to death, to condemnation, these two polar emotions are somehow the strongest manipulating element that works there. It's a cruel organization, of course, it's a terrible cruelty, because the boss of the Witnesses has a woman in front of him, whose life is at stake, and he's cruel to her, it's totally like no interpersonal emotionality, that's the essence of fanaticism, isn't it. For a beautiful idea, I am able to kill all people around me. The reason is probably that in such a religious society the devotion, the enthusiasm of the individual people is decreasing and so it is very advantageous for the group to radicalize from time to time."

Articles of the SSSNRM violate the law §356 TZ - incitement to hatred towards a group of persons or to the limitation of their rights and freedom

8. 11. 1996, newspaper Lidove noviny, Scientologists are going to companies.

"It is a hundred percent moral pressure, "commented action of Jehovah's Witnesses Zdenek Vojtisek from Society for study of sects and new religious movements, according to which Witnesses are not a normal religion, but they use the psychic manipulation,

extortion and social isolation of their members." This is a dangerous totalitarian organization which practices must be monitored in details - not only by the superficial reading of their printed matters, as the Ministry of Culture does," said Z. Vojtisek."

15. 7. 1996, newspaper Vecernik Praha, Regional journals, Praha, Influence of the demons is strong

"Jehovah's Witnesses should never get registration. It is made an impression that who is registered is state approved." said to LN a forensic expert in the field of religion Tomas Novotny."

4. 4. 1998, newspaper Pravo, national newspapers, Biological weapons can get in hands of terrorists and sects, scientists warn

"The most well-known are Jehovah's Witnesses, who build on their own interpretations of the New Testament binding for the whole community and on central decision-making from New York's headquarter. Unlike most other cults, they have a concrete idea of the end of the world. More than five million members of the sect refuse to accept blood transfusions and to wear weapons."

Articles of the SSSNRM violate the law § 403 TZ - founding, supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedom

We think that SSSNRM was founded for these above mentioned reasons as it is confirming their activities within year 1993 - 2017.

06. 11. 1998, NOVA – TV news, Television, Watch out for a sect.

"Moderator (Martin Severa): Now, be careful of Oxford personality tests that Scientologists offer on the streets and in the subway. It's a scam. This claims Society for study of sects, according to which the tests do not even correspond to the standard psychological tests and it is not even supposed to be prepared by Oxford University. The Society for study of sects claims that scientologists have been trying to achieve influence, power and money. PhDr. Zdenek Vojtisek, Society for study of sects and new religious movements: He is persecuted by letters, phone calls, is slandered at his new employer. But the world knows cases where so-called renegades and opponents were persecuted systematically until their lives ended in suicide."

22. 8. 1996, Mlada fronta Dnes magazine, This evil comes with a smile

*"In sects, however, it is not so much of a massive, visible evil, as if it is about an individual, invisible evil that destroys family relationships, friendships and freely developing young lives. Unfortunately, such an evil is being lost in the whole society, victims of sects are not hundreds of thousands, but "only" a few tens of thousands. * And how will it continue? The sects will still cause many personal and family tragedies."*

29. 6. 1999, Regionalni denik, Experts for sect research warn against Čaitanji Mission

"During praying the prayers, people should realize that this custom can negatively affect their mental health," said Zdenek Vojtisek, the member of Society for study of sects and new religious movements."

Articles of the SSSNRM violate the law § 180 TZ - unauthorized use of personal information

Doc. Zdenek Vojtisek uses information from his expert activity for media slandering of religious movements.

10.7.2016 iDnes news, source YZID, Parsifal awakened the Czechs in horror of the sects, led loyal ones to the Thousand-year Empire.

"Zdenek Vojtisek states in one of his publications that exclusion from the community was accompanied by severe condemnation, arousing guilt from disappointment and betrayal of messiah. Allegedly, with some exclusions, advice on "postponing the body" has also occurred. Suicide was forbidden, but attempts to starve in the forests were recorded.

"It is also true that the community behaved very irresponsibly. The danger to health and life actually existed. At least twelve to fifteen people tried to die," estimates Vojtisek. No case of completed suicide was documented."

30. 6. 2014. Idnes: Method of „unhooking“ is a total nonsense, said sexuologist Weiss. Online source: https://zlin.idnes.cz/sexuolog-petr-weiss-u-zlinskeho-soudu-s-guru-jarou-fxl-zlin-zpravy.aspx?c=A140730_152419_zlin-zpravy_ras

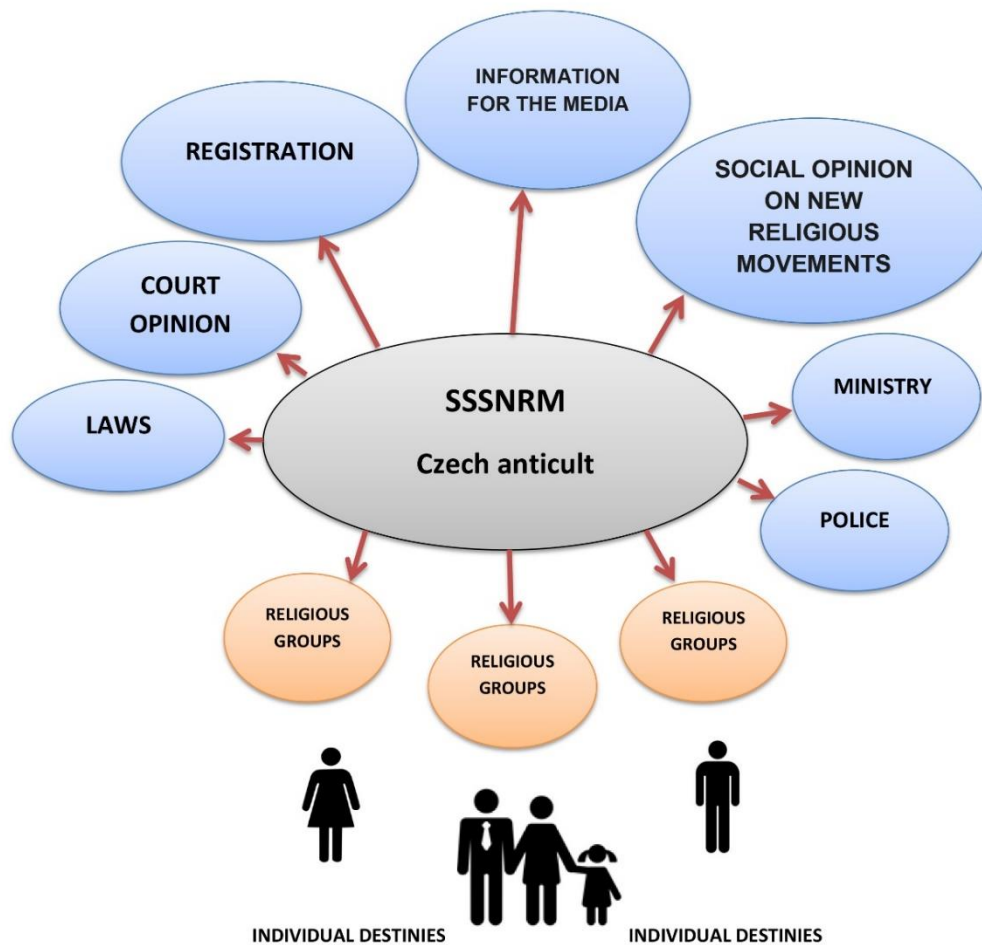
"Another forensic expert, the religionist Zdenek Vojtisek, said that the school Poetrie belongs among new religious movements and had the general features of the sect. "At first there was always a manipulative pressure through the atmosphere of trust, then there was a negative manipulation," said Vojtisek. Representatives of Poetrie, according to him, claimed to women that in case of an effort to resist, they were useless. "By this, they developed a sense of inferiority and dependence." In Poetrie, according to a specialist for study of religions, a charismatic relationship of the follower and leader was created. "This relationship gives the leader extraordinary qualities and he behaves as if he really had those qualities," mentioned Zdenek Vojtisek."

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The leading Czech anti-cult SSSNRM has a great impact on freedom of religion and belief in the Czech Republic for decades. It negatively affects not only religious societies and the church, but also the lives of thousands of individuals that make it impossible for them to fully live their faith. It has a huge direct impact on social perception. Through their publications, television appearances, articles, or other media involvement, they are spreading discriminative discourse and intolerance towards new religious groups and religious minorities.

The Society for the Study of Sects and New Religious Movements chooses different strategies to combat minor religions / new religion movement in media, in society and during negotiation with the governmental bodies - for example:

- 1 – unclear, vague and ever-changing definition of a sect
- 2 - variation of absolute destructiveness of sect versus neutral term according actual need
- 3 - which group is in the category of destructive list of sects keeps constantly changing
- 4 – principal incitement to hatred versus extremely rare defence rights of individual
- 5 - religionist pseudoscientific arguments and constructs disguised as science
- 6 - support from the state as there are recognized as “independent experts” on their field
- 7 - good spiritual rhetoric of SSSNRM, versus manipulative spiritual concepts of sects
- 8 – stigmatization by prejudices
- 9 – spreading fear and suspicion by showing deterrent examples (statistically outliers)
- 10 - spreading fear and suspicion by presenting one-side testimonies of apostates



For their liking to scandalize religious minorities and for its resounding title, which in itself is already inappropriate, the media prefer them. **They have a monopoly position in cooperation with the ministries of culture, interior and labor and social affairs. They prepare reports for the courts, help train police officers and cooperate with them to persecute new movements. The SSSNRM also has an impact on law-making, members are politically engaged, one of them is a member of the Czech Parliament.**

Because the anti-cult movement SSSNRM still functions in synergy with governmental bodies such as police forces, courts, the Ministry of Culture and media, it is heavily perpetuating the toxic attitudes toward spirituality in the Czech Republic which is responsible for destroying the sanity, wellness and rights of citizens to any personal religious belief or freedom of any kind.

In the Czech Republic, new religious movements are for decades practically unprotected against social prejudices, hate speech and hate crimes (Yoga in Daily life, Sahaja Yoga, Yogi Sat Nath), and sometimes even systematically persecuted or discriminated by the state representatives itself (as Jiri Krutina - Jiri Vacek, Petr Chobot, Church of Scientology, Grail movement) because of long-term activities of Czech anti-cult movement cooperating with

state authorities. The Path of Guru Jura is not only among the top most persecuted groups in CR, but has been victim to the most severe methods of persecution since the communist era.

Anyone associated with the anti-cult movement should not be recognized by any form of Czech authority as an independent and neutral expert on the topic of religion because their perception is on the contrary, biased and in favor of thwarting generally all new religious movements.

We are emphasizing the duty of neutrality and impartiality of the State here. The effectiveness of dialogues between state bodies and civil organizations, human rights institutions, or individuals should be greatly improved in cases where it is failing, such as feedback from events like OSCE-HDIM, or the negotiations between international human rights institutions and the State.

The effectiveness of specific state control mechanisms protecting human rights (such as the Ombudsman and Ministry of Human Rights) should be improved and given sensitivity training to help cope with religious issues in order to better catch and correct the serious misconduct of state bodies. Currently in the PGJ case, both offices mentioned here have been ignoring any plea for support or for remedy within our case.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC:

- **The anti-cult opinions should not be regarded as independent and state approved expertise on how to treat new religious movements (especially for police, courts, ministries).**
- **State should guarantee neutrality of governmental apparatus and they should rely on more independent expert opinions.**
- **The police should have effective corrective mechanisms in place in the case of its misuse of power and rely only on independent experts.**
- **Court should be accept only independent expert's truly neutral, not using anti-cult rhetoric and prejudices towards religious minorities.**
- **The right to a fair trial should be respected and upheld in every case, regardless of religion.**
- **The right to a fair trial also includes the right of respect for the presumption of innocence.**
- **Czech media should not be supporting hate speech and intolerance towards religious minorities according anti-cult rhetoric. They should give at least the same space for religious minorities as for the representatives of the Czech anti-cult movement.**
- **State authorities should be able to recognize religion, belief or opinion as possible field of discrimination, according Antidiscrimination Act (2009) and be proactive in combatting hate crimes, prejudices, ignorance and intolerance based on religious belief, including that found in the media and on the internet.**