

This report has been prepared on the request of Adele van der Plas, lawyer and legal counsel of the Santo Daime churches in the Netherlands. It's contents may be used as an expert's report in the legal procedure before the Amsterdam Court which is currently involving the Santo Daime churches in the Netherlands.

The questions that have been put to me are:

- What are the possible health and safety issues involved?
- What is the danger that the ritual religious use of ayahuasca in Santo Daime rituals may present to the public?
- What are the similarities between the religious use of ayahuasca in Santo Daime rituals in Europe and in Brazil?
- What are the possibilities of illicit diversions of the brew? -What is its relation to the drug problem?
- What is your appreciation of Prof. De Wolff's report?

I am Edward John Baptista das Neves MacRae, Ph.D., lecturer in anthropology at the Faculty of Philosophy and Human Sciences -Federal University of Bahia-FFCH/UFBA and associate researcher at the Centre for the Study and Therapy of Drug Abuse- Federal University of Bahia-CETAD/UFBA.

Also, I was recently appointed to the expert panel set up by General Alberto Cardoso, head of SENAD, the Brazilian National Anti-drug Office, to help draw up a proposal for a national drug policy. This appointment, which is independent of my research regarding the Santo Daime, was made owing to my longstanding work on the social and cultural aspects of drug use and on the prevention of abuse.

I, Edward John Baptista das Neves MacRae, solemnly affirm the truth of the matters set forth below.

In order to answer questions regarding the ritual use of the ayahuasca brew by the Santo Daime Church in Brazil and the possible implications of its use in the Netherlands I have reviewed the existing anthropological literature on the subject, including my own works and field notes. I am mainly interested in the subject from the point of view of drug policy and have written books and scientific articles from this perspective. Therefore, the questions that have been put to me with regard to the possible health and safety issues, the danger to the public, the similarities in the religious use of ayahuasca in Santo Daime rituals in Europe and in Brazil, the possibility of illicit diversions of the brew, its relation to the drug problem, and an appreciation of Prof. De Wolff's toxicological report are matters that I have been giving much thought to over the last decade, since I began my studies on Daime and other entheogens (psychoactive plants used for religious and sacred purposes).

Since 1987 I have been involved in Brazilian official drug prevention programs both at State and Federal levels. In this regard my main activities have been concerned with drug prevention among young adults, including issues such as distribution of illicit drugs and curbing HIV infection among injecting drug users. For some years now my academic research interest has also included the religious use of psychoactive substances and I have studied in special detail and *in loco*, the use of ayahuasca in the Santo Daime services both in Brazil and in Europe (in Spain, Holland, Germany, France and Italy). The issue of the religious use of psychoactive plants had never been a very important question from the point of view of national drug policy. This is because on no occasion had this ever presented any major problem to public health or to the maintenance of law and order, until approximately 15 years ago when certain religions whose major centres were in the Amazon expanded and began to emerge in the cities.

A number of public inquiries have been held into this matter due to the apparently odd status of the legal use of this substance in a country that follows quite closely the Vienna Convention protocols on the control of illicit drug use and trafficking.

As an anthropologist, I have been particularly struck by the arguments presented by important theoretical thinkers on the drug question, such as Norman Zinberg, in the USA, Claude Olievenstein, in France and Antonio Nery Filho, in Brazil. They maintain that in order to approach this question successfully one must take into account not only its pharmacological but also its psychological and socio-cultural aspects. In spite of the fact that he was a psychiatrist, it was Norman Zinberg who most clearly pointed the way to an anthropological study of drug control, as can be perceived in the following quotation:

"I contended, first, that in order to understand what impels someone to use an illicit drug and how that drug affects the user, three determinants must be considered: drug (the pharmacological action of the substance itself), set (the attitude of the person at the time of use, including his personality structure) and setting (the influence of the physical and social setting within which the use occurs). Of these three determinants, setting had received the least attention and recognition; therefore, it was made the focus of the investigation. Thus the second hypothesis, a derivative of the first, was that it is the social setting, through the development of sanctions and rituals, that brings the use of illicit drugs under control

The use of any drug involves both values and rules of conduct (which I have called social sanctions) and patterns of behavior (which I have called social rituals); these two together are known as informal social controls. Social sanctions define whether and how a particular drug should be used... Social rituals are the stylized, prescribed behavior patterns surrounding the use of a drug"

(Norman E. Zinberg, M.D., Yale University Press, 1984).

Thus, in my research among drug users, I have usually tried to detect the existence of these social sanctions and social rituals and examine their operation. In my studies of the Daime, this led me initially to study the founder of the movement, the Black rubber tapper Raimundo Irineu Serra, who lived in the Territory of Acre, in the Brazilian Amazon region. It was he who, in the second decade of the twentieth century, after being introduced to the ayahuasca brew by an Indian shaman, began a long process of making its use compatible with Christian values and beliefs.

Ayahuasca is a tea that is brewed from a mixture of *Psychotria viridis* leaf which contains the indole alkaloid N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT—a psychoactive chemical) and the *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine, which contains certain alkaloids known as beta-carbolines. DMT, the specific alkaloid often thought to be most responsible for the psychoactive effects of ayahuasca, is not active when taken orally, because it is digested by the enzyme monoamine oxidase (MAO) commonly found in the stomach. The combination of DMT and the MAO-inhibiting beta-carbolines to be found in the brew renders the DMT active and produces the characteristic psychoactive effects.

Substituting the ambiguous traditional shamanic power ethic, "Mestre Irineu", as he was commonly known, introduced the Christian values of unconditional love for one's neighbors and the veneration of Catholic saints. As for the ayahuasca brew which he renamed Daime or Santo Daime (Holy Daime), he likened it to the Christian sacrament, considering it to be "The Blood of Christ".

Acre was very sparsely inhabited at that time and was yet to undergo the process of colonization that has now made it into an integral part of the Brazilian nation. Some anthropologists argue that the doctrine spread by "Mestre Irineu", played a key role in the transition from life in the isolation of the forest to urban conviviality, undergone by the local population after the end of the rubber boom. As such the Santo Daime doctrine is an integral element in Acrean culture, even though today most of its inhabitants may nominally profess to be Catholic.

Mestre Irineu's contribution to a more Westernized use of ayahuasca included the development of a series of new rituals he received in visions, involving the sacramental use of Daime, displaying again a marked Christian influence, although certain Indian and African characteristics are also to be detected. They vary according to the occasion and may be celebratory "hymns", meditational "concentrations", exorcisms, "healing works", funeral "masses" and the "makings", during which the sacrament is ritually prepared. The Church doctrine can be roughly described as Catholicism modified by indigenous and African influences. The hymns of the Church are conceived of as having been received by Mestre Irineu from God and are remarkably similar to the hymns sung in a Catholic

Church. They reflect a belief in Jesus Christ as the Savior and speak to all of the traditional Catholic values and social standards. My report includes as an exhibit the Hinário of Padrinho Sebastião Mota de Melo, the successor of Mestre Irineu. By way of comparison to a traditional Catholic ceremony, the Santo Daime "works" all begin with the Lord's Prayer and the "Hail Mary." And every ceremony ends with the following prayer:

In the name of God, the Father,
Of the Sovereign Virgin Mother
Of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
Of the Patriarch Saint Joseph
And all the Divine Beings
Of the Celestial Court
Under the orders of
Our Imperial Master Juramidain
Our work is closed.
My brothers and my sisters
Praised be God in the heights
So that She be always praised,
Our Mother Most Holy Mary,
Over the whole of Humanity

The Church rituals, which are invariably accompanied by the singing of hymns containing a strong Catholic imagery, frequently involve communal dancing. They are very structured affairs, with fixed steps and during which everyone keeps to predetermined places, with a rigid separation according to sex and age group. The emphasis on self-control, found throughout the Daime ceremonies, has led anthropologists to consider them to be "rituals of order", promoting group and hierarchical cohesion and a search for spiritual harmony both within and without. This order is maintained through the observance of what Zinberg would call a series of "social rituals."

Although, from a pharmacological point of view, Daime contains potent psychoactive agents, such as DMT and other alkaloids, the historical use made of it by these religious organizations establishes that there is no evidence that it leads to ill results, as attested by recent medical studies of long time users. This is probably due, at least in some measure, to the strict ritual control built around this practice and to the fact that the brew is not taken extraritually.

Every Daimic ritual or "work" is thought to be an opportunity for learning and healing and for the indoctrination of the spirits present either in the "material" or in the "astral" planes. As mentioned, there are different rituals for different occasions or different needs but they all involve taking the brew and entering into an altered state of consciousness in a Christian religious social and physical setting designed to contain and guide the experience.

Many factors contribute to this, such as:

- a) dietary and behavioral prescriptions involving, for example, abstinence from alcoholic beverages, that must be observed during the three days that precede and follow the taking of the drink, setting the stage for an unusual event that escapes the daily routine.
- b) hierarchical social organization in which a "padrinho"(church elder or leader) conducts the service with the help of assistants whose duties are not dissimilar to those performed by ushers meeting the needs of the congregates
- c) control of the dosage of the drink taken by participants.
- d) ritual spatial organization and ritual structure control. There is a central table\altar where the double armed Cross of Caravacca and other religious symbols mark the sacred nature of the event. All those taking part are given a specific place in the room, usually in a rectangle formation drawn on the ground, where they must remain, grouped by sex, age, and, in certain more traditional areas, sexual status (virgins and non-virgins).

Generally, sober white and green or white and blue uniforms of a modest cut stress the unity of the group and help maintain a mood of religious ritual seriousness. The service is highly prescribed, involving a combination of simple dance steps. The singing of hymns and the movements of those taking part are also rigidly prescribed and one of the main duties of the assistants is to ensure the maintenance of the ritual order and the recommended postures such as the raised heads and relaxed and immobile arms and legs that considered most appropriate for the seated "works". One of the most important ritual elements is the music sung and played during most of the ceremonies. This helps harmonize the group, through marked rhythms and voices in unison. The ritual use of music harks back to ancient shamanic customs from which the ceremonial taking of ayahuasca originates. Singing and the use of percussion instruments with a strong,

repetitive beat, are powerful aids and are thought to act as a way of invoking spirits. The words of the "hymns" which invoke common Catholic themes such as reverence of Christ, and the teachings of peace and love direct the focus of the ritual experience in the desired direction of invoking spiritual and personal insights and communion with God. They also assist in mitigating any discomfort associated with the ingestion of the tea.

The hymns also help the participants to interpret the experiences they have during the services. They help to create connections between the lived experiences and the spiritual or mythical symbols with which they become invested, which is of great importance promoting the cohesiveness of the ceremony for all who attend. The Catalan anthropologist Josep Maria Fericgla, working on the Indian use of ayahuasca, like his British counterpart Victor Turner, considers that this is a psychic or spiritual function of symbols which was lost by Western societies when they abandoned their traditional ways of organizing unconscious drives and of using these "sources of renovation" for individual and collective benefit. (Fericgla 1989:13).

Norman Zinberg's model of controlled drug use for dealing with issues of drug and alcohol abuse, emphasized the important role played by social sanctions and social rituals that reinforce given sets of values, rules of conduct and standardized ways of producing, consuming and dealing with effects (Zinberg 1984:5). Zinberg's model can be viewed not simply as a model, but rather as standard for defining or redefining the underlying assumptions regarding "drug use." Thus, to the extent that certain substances are considered "drugs" when used under a given set of circumstances, and as "non drugs" in other circumstances, the drinking of the Daime tea as the sacrament of this religion would be the classic example of the "non drug" use. {As noted in the CONFEN Report cited below}. The purpose for which Daime is taken, the ritualistic and highly structured ceremonies which are focused on Christian doctrine with indigenous nuances, together ensure that the social taboos that accompany the typical drug user, do not, in this case, pertain in any manner.

More recently, the Dutch anthropologist Jean-Paul Grund, carrying out research among heroin and cocaine users in the Netherlands, further developed Zinberg's theory by proposing what he calls a "feedback model of

drug use self-regulation" that may help us establish the demarcation between what is common called a "drug" and a sacramental use of plants that contain psychoactive properties. His model takes into account two further elements: the availability of the substance and life structure (Grund 1993:247). The Daime and other ayahuasca using religious organizations seem good examples of these models. Not only do they also adopt ritual procedures for the taking of the brew that fulfill all the prerequisites laid out by Zinberg, but they also regulate their followers access to the substance and provide them with doctrinal guidance on the structuring of their lives, the controlling elements Grund added to his model.

Recent Investigations of the Daime

During Mestre Irineu's lifetime and after his death, in 1971, some of his early followers embarked on new paths. Amazonian rubber tapper, Sebastião Mota de Melo, better known as Padrinho Sebastião, who after Mestre Irineu's demise chose to become autonomous introduced some new elements of his own revelations to the doctrine. Unlike the other Daime leaders, he was very welcoming towards young newcomers from outside the Amazon area. As a result, a number of centers were then set up in the southern metropolis and the size of the congregations increased. More recently, especially in the 90's, Santo Daime churches following Padrinho Sebastião's spiritual line began to be set up abroad and are now to be found in many South American and European countries, in the United States and Japan.

When they were originally set up these Santo Daime churches played an important role in helping migrants from the forest adapt and integrate into their new urban environment. Nowadays, however, a great part of the new followers come from a different socio-cultural background. They are, generally speaking, young adults with secondary or university level education and with lower middle-class incomes. Although they may face different problems from those of the rubber tappers newly arrived in the city, who made up the bulk of the original members; they have their own adaptation and existential problems. In Brazil today the young of all classes are dealing with the consequences of the modern social and economic world where a greatly diminished emphasis is placed on traditional religion and its cohesive value.

Young people have to cope with the very quick cultural changes occurring around them with regard to the sexual and work ethics as well as the breakdown of traditional family organization and values. In the face of this somewhat hostile milieu, belonging to such a religious group provides them with a sense of social, psychological and spiritual identity, which for many are very familiar and similar to their very early indoctrination to traditional Christian doctrine.

The disciplined use of Daime also provides congregates with a safe, well mapped route to the kind of transcendental spiritual experience that many people seem to be searching for in the compulsive use of alcohol and drugs. Thus, taking part in these religious groups tends to be a particularly effective way of dealing with alcoholism and drug addiction. In this regard, rather than trying to forbid any kind of induced alteration of consciousness, the Daime allows certain experiences of the kind. But at the same time it provides a powerful structuring religious framework within which the congregate may work through personal and difficult life issues in a safer setting. One could, quite appropriately say that the Santo Daime religious doctrine and practice is intrinsically a very desirable and effective harm reduction methodology which has shown itself to be of great social and psychological value to the congregates.

As long as the use of Daime was confined to the distant Amazonian region it was ignored by the metropolis-oriented Brazilian authorities and opinion makers. However, the spread of the Santo Daime church and another church [the União do Vegetal that also holds Ayahuasca as its sacrament] among the urban middle class youth soon called official attention. In 1986, pending further studies, the government decided to ban the use of ayahuasca. However the study group officially appointed, by the Federal Narcotics Council --CONFEN, to look into the matter, after six months research produced a paper calling for the repeal of the ban on a nationwide level. Among other arguments, they pointed out that no damage to health had been proven to be caused by the use of the brew and that the members of the different religious groups had been found to be orderly and to lead their lives according to the accepted social values.

In 1992 CONFEN set up another study group to update the previous conclusions, new visits were made to the ayahuasca using religious communities and further interviews were carried out with their leaders and members. Leading medical researchers, as well as social scientists, were also consulted. The final report produced by the group confirmed the recommendations made in the previous one that the religious use of the brew ought to remain legal, although a new inquiry might be set up, should new evidence point to the illegitimate use of ayahuasca. There was also a call for the various ayahuasca-using bodies to set up joint commissions to draw up a common set of guidelines that might govern the different ritual uses of the brew.

Returning to the question with regard to the possible health and safety issues, the danger to the public, the possibility of illicit diversions of the brew and its relation to the drug problem, the following is a summary of my views:

As for the health safety issues involved in the use of Daime or ayahuasca, several studies have already been conducted both by Brazilian and foreign scientists pointing out the relative harmlessness of the brew to the organism (Andrade et al. 1995, Aranha et al. 1991, Callaway et al. 1994, Costa et al. 1995, C}rob et al. 1996, Mackenna et al. 1998).

Similarly, the inquiries held by CONFEN as well as other anthropological research have shown that those persons who take the tea in the limited context of the religious rituals described herein, are particularly abiding to the basic values of traditional Brazilian society. The case of the Daime community Ceu do Mapia, in the heart of the Amazonian rain forest, is a sinking example of this. The whole area is renowned for the poverty of its inhabitants and for its lawlessness; yet this community, in spite of its own poverty, is an oasis of tranquility and order, where the problems of drunkenness, violence and prostitution, endemic in the region, are virtually unknown. Ceu do Mapia, in fact, acts as a refuge for many trying to escape the surrounding misery and its leaders are widely respected for their kindness and wisdom.

Since the early 90's, Santo Daime services have been held regularly in Europe, under the organization of European citizens but counting with the ritual supervision of Amazonian Santo Daime leaders. These services follow as closely as possible the Brazilian models, the only significant difference relating to the use of the local language, instead of Portuguese. Thus it is safe to affirm that the same safeguards that apply to the religious use of ayahuasca in Santo Daime services in Brazil apply in the European context as well.

The possibilities of diversion of the brew from its ritual purposes are quite small. As already mentioned, Daime is likened to the Holy Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, and considered to be an object of veneration in itself. The access to it is a jealously preserved prerogative of a small body of veterans and subject to great communal vigilance. In addition, from the moment of the initial gathering of the vines and leaves that make up the tea, to its preparation and actual brewing, the handling and stocking of the ingredients and of the final product are surrounded by several taboos. Even the shipment of Daime to the different extra-Amazonian churches is a matter of great spiritual concern and care and serious efforts are made to ensure that it is never left unguarded. In this environment it is very difficult for anyone to try to adulterate it, for instance, since the Santo Daime followers believe that even a drop of water, added outside the ritual, is enough to rob it of its sacredness.

I am familiar with the process for maintaining control over the Daime manufacture, distribution, exporting and accounting to ensure that it is not diverted to an illicit use in Brazil or abroad. The brew masters keep detailed records of every batch of tea that is brewed. The tea is labeled and kept in a guarded locked building in Mapiá. Whenever there is a shipment to another church, the brew masters record the exact amount that is being transported. It must be remembered that "Daime" is generally produced in "Colônia 5.000" on the outskirts of Rio Branco or in the "Céu do Mapiá" community, in the heart of the rain forest. From these places it is sent to the leaders of the other churches, who have been entrusted by the head of the religious movement with the responsibility of distributing the sacred brew. The Daime is usually stored ceremoniously in the house of the local leader. There it may only be handled by a few more trusted members of the local church.

Each local Church, in turn, is required to keep detailed records regarding the number of people who attend a service and the amount of Daime distributed at that service. This is done for every service. There is a requirement that local records be maintained and presented to the brew masters upon request.

Similarly, when the tea is exported, all of the typical export documents are filed out in Brazil, including those listing the contents of the product. When a batch is received in another country, the Church leaders there are required to keep similar records and present copies to Brazil periodically.

I am satisfied that the tea is controlled in a way that renders the likelihood of it being distributed to the illicit market virtually impossible. Because each of the Church leaders, or someone under his/her direct supervision, is responsible for administering the tea at services, the controls are very effective. Indeed, it would constitute a sacrilege for anyone to have the tea outside of the ritual services. These controls have been more than adequate to meet the country's drug policy expectations of ensuring that the Daime does not make its way into the illicit markets in Brazil after more than a decade of its legalization for Church use.

The myths that have developed regarding the use of all psychoactive plants have generally failed to recognize that the setting determines in large measure the label that should be applied. The traditional views that all "drugs" are excuses to avoid real life issues and to obtain a "pleasurable high" are descriptions which have no relationship at all to the religious drinking of the Daime tea.

Those who lack a serious intent tend to be pushed away by several aspects of the ceremony such as the length and rigidity of the ceremonies; the traditional values conveyed by the doctrine and by the hymns that are ritually sung throughout; the bitter and foul taste of the tea and the purging or vomiting physical reactions that accompany the taking of the brew. Yet, many who initially may have been moved by idle curiosity find themselves touched by the ritual experience and go on to become converted to the doctrine, opening themselves to profound changes in their values and life styles. The traditional

Indian use of ayahuasca has always been closely associated with spiritual healing and it is quite remarkable how many of the old Amazonian Santo Daime veterans claim to have become rid of alcoholism thanks to their sacrament. Even among younger more urban church members there are many who claim to have given up alcohol and cocaine abuse thanks to the doctrine. So it seems that rather than being an object of concern, the spread of this religion may contribute to the diminishing of drug abuse. This would be due to the values promoted by the doctrine which include an emphasis on the seriousness and sacredness of the Daime experience and the teaching that the taking of Daime ought never to be engaged in lightly. The quest for self-knowledge and self-control must always be its paramount motivation.

It is my opinion that from a drug policy perspective, there are no government policy objectives that are violated by the sacramental use of Daime. It has clearly contributed to the spiritual and psychological well being of thousands of Brazilians who have chosen to become members of the Church.

In a country like Brazil it is very significant that several important Catholic leaders recognize the Santo Daime church and it has spoken eloquently about its service to environmental and humanitarian issues and is and is considered a full partner in inter-religious organizations and conferences in Brazil.

As for the findings presented in Prof. De Wolff's toxicological report, the official English translation of which has been submitted to my examination, as an anthropologist I have nothing to add to it and consider it to be very fair. I was specially impressed by his emphasis, on page 3, that the present case involves the consumption of a compound rather than DMT alone, which leads him to, contrary to the Terms of Reference, use the term ayahuasca in the rest of his report.

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