

Tomasz WRÓBLEWSKI
Editor-in-Chief
Newsweek
Al. Jerozolimskie 181
(Ochota Office Park)
02 - 222 Warsaw

Open Letter

Dear Mr. Editor-in-Chief,

The cover of issue No. 14 of "Newsweek" (4.04.2004) has caused our deep concern as an example of arrogance in the manner of treating a very serious human issue. This relates to the dignified, honest and peaceful performance of the resolved and legally established restitution of properties belonging to Jewish religious communes in Poland.

The signs placed on the cover and inside the issue ("JEWS reclaim what's theirs"; "JEWS RETURN FOR WHAT IS THEIRS") are not consistent with the truth, because they generalize an occurrence that is very limited in its extent. Writing about a conflict in such a manner, causes it to expand, fuels emotions and makes it difficult to hold sensible negotiations. The issue includes appropriate explanations (texts written by P. Paziński and W. Osiatyński), which are unfortunately lost among the material illustrating the main fears and anti-Semitic attitudes of the occupants of former-Jewish buildings.

The authors could have written, in accordance with the truth, that "the property of Jewish communes is slowly being returned to them" or "Jews desire first and foremost remembrance" – however that wouldn't cause a sensation. With sadness we accuse "Newsweek" of seeking success in competitive rivalry at the cost of public interests.

On behalf of the Helsinki Committee in Poland:

Teresa Bogucka, Halina Bortnowska Dąbrowska, Marek Edelman, Janusz Grzelak, Zbigniew Hołda, Jacek Kurczewski, Michał Nawrocki, Danuta Przywara, Andrzej Rzepliński and Stefan Starczewski

Danuta Przywara

Warsaw, 2 April 2004