Robert Walter’s Struggle with the UB: the Unknown Story

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Abstract

This paper attempts to show the unknown life story of Robert Walter (1908–1981). Walter was one of the best-known Polish esotericist, and yet the most forgotten, as well as the leader of the Memphis-Misraim Order, who also used the pseudonym “Waltari”. His story remains unknown to this day, including the time of being imprisoned by the Office of Public Security (UB). Based on the documentation kept in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), agential reports indicate he raised interest on two levels: the first was his connections in esoteric and academic circles, and the second – the more important – his acquaintance with Boris Smyslovsky during the years of the occupation.

Keywords: Robert Walter, security services, Memphis-Misraim, esotericism

Robert Walter, the “Master of Komorów”, as disciples and supporters used to call him, was an outstanding and extraordinary individual. The events of his life would make a fine film script. His biography\(^1\), though already written, is yet to be published and probably never will be. Walter was a teacher to Jerzy Prokopiuk\(^2\), a friend to Nina Andrycz\(^3\), who together with her husband Józef Cyranlewicz sought his advice, to

\(^1\) I am referring here to the research conducted by Maciej Puczyński and Maksymilian Bojarski, resulting in an unpublished 109-page long biography, completed in 2004 under the title Walter. I gained access to this text owing to my acquaintance with Bojarski.


\(^3\) She claims in her diaries to have become his disciple. See: N. Andrycz, Bez początku, bez końca, Warszawa 2003, p. 91.
Andrzej Wierciński, and to Wojciech Eichelberger, because of whom he briefly got into the mainstream⁴ press.

His story remains unknown to this day, including the time of being imprisoned by the Office of Public Security (UB). Based on the documentation kept in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), I shall attempt in this paper to recreate those events. Naturally, as a researcher of the history of Polish esotericism, I shall do so with regard to his relationship with esoteric orders and freemasonry – institutions which were subject to vast surveillance conducted by the UB and its successor, the Security Service (SB).

Robert Maria Adolf Walter (1908–1981) was born in Lviv three years after his older brother Ryszard, the son of Edmund and Matylda. He inherited his interest in esotericism from his mother, a Medical Academy graduate who was a frequent guest at esoteric lectures and in such circles. According to those close to him, from his childhood years Robert had an extraordinary gift for telling the hidden features of people unknown to him. Even at the age of 16, he led his own group of astrological disciples⁵. At first, he sourced his the knowledge of Cabala, magic and alchemy during lectures conducted by the Society of Esoteric Studies⁶ in Warsaw. He was introduced to the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), which guided him as a spiritual path almost to the end of his days (before his death he returned under the wing of the Catholic Church), by his mother’s acquaintance, the painter Jadwiga Siedlecka (Wiga), who had met Steiner in person.

The surveillance of Walter began in 1948. Agential reports indicate that he raised interest on two levels: the first was his connections in esoteric and academic circles, and the second – the more important – his acquaintance with Boris Smyslovsky during the years of the occupation. As for the former level, an annalistic sheet made in the form of an excerpt of matters deserving interest before commencing the arrest procedure and, as a consequence, as directions for first interrogations, comprises 83 denunciations of secret co-operators. Issues breached in the denunciations cover Walter’s overall life, daily matters (visits paid by his guests), and carefully noted utterances made by him and those who came in contact with him⁷. From 1948 to 1952 (that is, to the moment of his arrest), Walter was surveilled indirectly or directly by six denouncers. Their conspiratorial pseudonyms include “Wanda”, “Borowik” and “Popiel”. Walter’s more important contacts make a study comprising 50 names in

⁶ The Society of Esoteric Studies was registered on 14th January 1924. Its management board comprised W. Kloczkowski (president), S. Trojanowski and B. Filipowski. The concept of the society came from Czesław Czyński, and the society itself was to be an extension of the Martinist Order. The Institute for Hermetic Studies existed under the aegis of the society.
⁷ IPN BU 0 1251/226, pp. 32–39. IPN – The Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, the institution would take control over the archives of the Communist political police which were controlled by the Secret Service. It would also make the documents available to people who were objects of invigilation. Abbreviation used in the text: IPN BU (BU – Biuro Udostępniania Archiwów – Office for the Preservation and Dissemination of Archival Records).