



## The Myth of Polish Satanism

Czesław Czyński – The Trial That Was Not There

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**Abstract.** – This article is a reconstruction of scandalous events from 1930 identified with “Polish Satanists.” The main suspect of these events was Czesław Czyński, who also used the pseudonym “Punar Bhava.” Czyński was one of the best known and yet the most forgotten Polish esoterists and the leader of the Order of Martinists. Was he really linked to Satanism? What about strange suicides among his students? The article attempts to answer these questions. [*Poland, Satanism, Czesław Czyński, process, suicide*]

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Most probably no Polish luminary<sup>1</sup> in the field of the 20th-century magic and esotericism is more famous than Czesław Czyński (1858–1932).<sup>2</sup> This magician, hypnotist, and the creator of Polish Martinism,<sup>3</sup> highly popular in Poland of 1895–1930 and, moreover, in the world, has become famous in the Polish occultism<sup>4</sup> as a “satanist.”<sup>5</sup> In a country wrapped up in Christian religion like in an eider-down, satanism<sup>6</sup> was perceived as a crime against humanity. However, many things happen under the quilt; unfortunately, not always what we believe to be going on. I have studied all records, even the slightest mentions of Czyński for over eight years. I have visited numerous old attics and forgotten tenement houses with an intention to find his legacy. In this article, I would like to take up the subject of his alleged share in satanic proceedings, in which, as I suppose, he did not participate at all.

- 1 Poland of distant times was famous for its eminent magicians and occultists. Forgotten and suppressed, they await an adequate position in the history. Michał Sędziwój (1566–1636), placed in the hall of fame among the 12 most significant alchemists in the world; Józef Hoene-Wroński (1776–1853), whom E. Levi, the precursor of the revival of magic, considered his teacher; Jan Wawrzyniec Twardowski (1515–1573) – these are some of the most known names of those distinguished in the Polish esotericism, magic, and alchemy.
- 2 For details concerning the bibliography of this grand Polish esotericist, see Łagosz (2006a).
- 3 Martinism is an occult tradition originating in the ideas of Martinès de Pasqually and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin; originally in form of speculative freemasonry with reference to Gnosticism, Kabbalah, spiritualism, and ceremonial magic, adopting in time more and more elements of Christian mysticism. For more information on the Polish branch of this order see Łagosz (2006b).
- 4 Generally speaking, the occult is the faith in the existence of mystical forces and the practice of hermetic sciences (i.e., astrology, magic, alchemy, secret medicine, and divination), though constructing a precise definition of this phenomenon is not an easy task, hence the on-going discussion over this matter in scientific literature. On one hand, there is the definition developed by Joseph Banks Rhine (1963: 609 – the occult as a philosophy of concealed things) and, on the other, that of Edward A. Tiryakian (1974: 256 – the occult as a purposeful practice, a technique, or a procedure implemented in natural forces, objects, and persons, requiring expert knowledge and skills). This debate is examined, among others, in Mrozek-Dumanowska (1990: 48 ff.). In time, the term “occult” has been replaced with new names, as, e.g., “parapsychology” and, finally, “psychotronics” (Musiał i Wolniewicz 1975: 155). Yet, many successors of the occult, originating especially in the teachings of magical orders, did not approve of these terms. Thus, the term “pseudo-occultism” was developed (Fortune 1938), used by the “real” occultists to describe “charlatans,” who were earning money on the naive yearn for demonstrations of higher power, yet who often proved to be

At that time, the press got to know of a satanic group due to several incidents of suicidal deaths of Czyński's former students from Ordo Albi Orientis (Order of the White East). The order was founded by Czyński about 1926, soon after his resignation from the Polish branch of the Martinist Order he has left, which he had formed in 1918. Deprived of the leadership and excluded from the society, Czyński most probably decided to retake the path of sexual magic (unaccepted in Martinism, yet known, as far as I am concerned, in Ordo Templi Orientis,<sup>7</sup> in which Czyński participated), adopting most aspects of the hierarchical structure of the Martinist Order.

The suicide wave (six victims in all) commenced most likely in 1924. I have not identified precise motives that were driving the suicides yet. The depicted events deeply touched the contemporary society. Soon it also turned out that all suicides were interrelated with an object found near each of the deceased, namely, a piece of paper with the letters

*shin* written on it – the first letters of the name She-loshet (Satan)<sup>8</sup> – along with the inscription, “under Satan’s command” (Anonymous 1930q: 6). Further in the text we shall return to deciphering the meaning of this mysterious note.

The first indication the press was given was the arrest of Jan Sylwester Grabari, residing in Warsaw at Nowogrodzka 14, on June 14th, 1929. The mentioned man was caught stealing the Holy Communion. It was a sign for the newspapers that a sect of Satan worshippers operated in the capital. The press was not discouraged from pursuing the hint, not even by the fact, that due to his mental condition, Grabari had been in the St. John of God’s psychiatric hospital until obtaining a discharge on December 5th, 1929, when he was judged to pose no risk to others. The press began to associate the theft of communion wafers with several suicides that took place between 1926 and 1930, thereby suggesting proceedings of an unknown blasphemous satanic sect.

The first suicide, Eugeniusz Rostkowski, residing in Warsaw at Nowy Świat 43, was found by the police with his head shot. Other victims were, consecutively: Bolesław Wójcicki, Lucjan Krzyżewski (a resident at the hall of residence at Grójecka), Wanda and Beata – female students at the University of Technology (unfortunately, their last names were nowhere to be found), and Zbigniew Werner (residing at Królewska Street). On August 30th, 1930 the search at Czyński’s apartment begins. Two officers enter the premises at Lwowska 6 and confiscate liturgical accessories and documents. Three days later, by order of the 12th district attorney, Mieczysław Siewierski, an official large-scale operation against Satanists begins. The investigation is led by inspector Jarosiński on authorisation of a Bureau of Investigation.

The entire Poland of that time read about their supposed outrageous trespasses. Bogdan Filipowski<sup>9</sup> and Mikołaj Mikołajewicz Czaplin were the

cunning frauds. A more social definition of the occult is presented by de Camp i de Camp (1970: 234f.). According to them, the occult is the art of reaching the invisible world to acquire the knowledge of ancient wise men, to establish contact with spirits of the dead, to obtain power over a demon or a deity, or just to leave the boring reality and to head for the fascinating astral world instead.

5 He is regarded as such by, e.g., Rev. A. Zwoliński (2007: 184ff.), Janina Walicka (1991), Dariusz Łukasiewicz (1999); and many more writers.

6 Let us define the concept of satanism. According to Anonymous (2003: 43), “[t]raditional satanism in a narrow sense, in Christian theology, a cult of Satan as an embodied evil and the opposite of God; in a wider sense – various kinds of magical and cultic practices aiming to influence beings considered in a given religious tradition as negative, which are not allowed as worship objects (the influence is believed to ensure success and ability to harm others for the individual who practices Satanism). The term ‘Satanism’ has been popularised in the second half of 19th century as a result of an increasing interest in the occult. Information regarding real Traditional Satanism is very scarce, it is largely a figment of imagination.”

7 Ordo Templi Orientis, e.g., the Order of the Temple of the East, is an organisation of an esoteric nature founded about 1903 by Carl Kellner, Heinrich Klein, Franz Hartmann, and, later headed by Theodor Reuß. Its formation was revealed in 1903 in Germany in the freemasonic newspaper *Oriflame* (though at that time the order has not been formalised yet, as only the definition of its essence was formed). Initially the order existed only in the German-speaking part of Europe. After 1913, when Aleister Crowley joined the order, the first offshoot of O. T. O. outside Germany was created in London. The rituals referred to the occultist tradition of the West and Tantric practices. Unlike other freemasonic organisations, O. T. O. welcomed also women (one of the few institutions of this kind admitting female members was the mixed freemasonry of A. Besant). According to Kellner (Urban 2006: 46f.), magical rituals of sexual character were supposed to enable the understanding of secrets of Christian and masonic mysticism.

8 Zwoliński claims that Czyński considered the world evil in accordance to Gnosis, explaining God wanted it this way. Therefore, the very creation of the world makes God a “reversed” God with the name of Satan (Zwoliński 2007: 185).

9 Filipowski was a friend to Witkacy and a coauthor of his book on narcotics (Witkiewicz 1932). Since Witkacy was allergic to morphine and could not experience its effects himself, he instructed Filipowski to take the drug in his place and to describe the effect. Witkacy made several paintings of his friend – one of these portraits presents Filipowski as an Indian woman. Filipowski was also portrayed by Michał Choromański in a book called “Schodami w górę, schodami w dół” as Ignacy Lilipowski. He was a very intriguing and highly controversial character. Filipowski wrote a book titled “Upiór Żabiej Przełęcz”, yet he did not succeed in finding a publisher. He lived for several years in Zakopane, engaging in various occupations with varying degrees of success. Still,

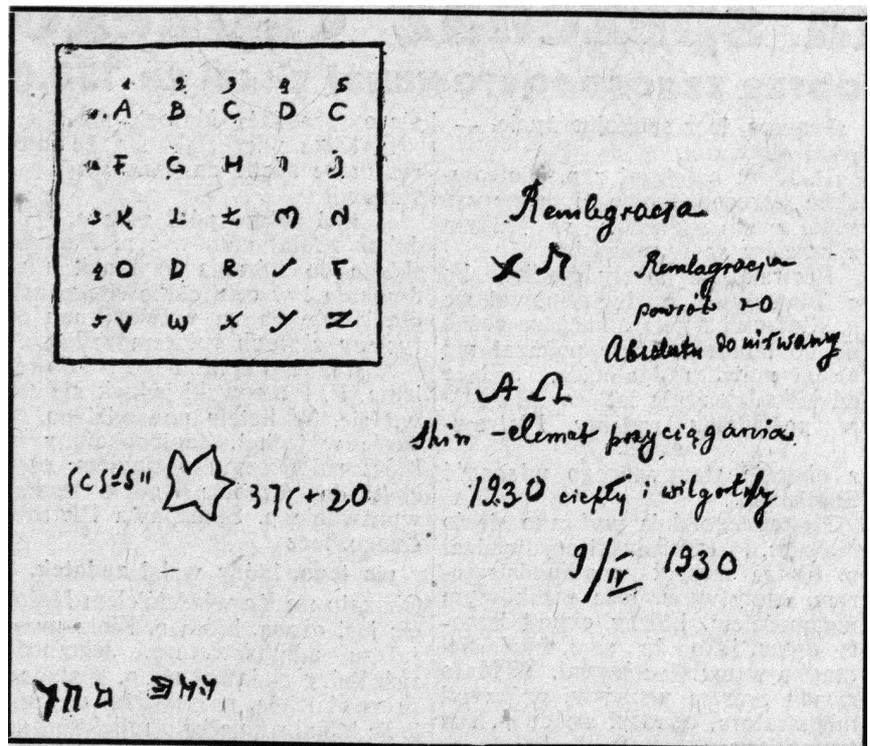


Fig. 1: The sheet of paper found near one of the suicides, Lucjan Krzyzewski, a student of Warsaw University.

main accused. Vast descriptions of black masses allegedly witnessed by unidentified individuals thrilled the public.<sup>10</sup>

After Czyński’s exclusion in 1926, Czaplín became the new leader of Polish Martinists and, therefore, the key figure causing revulsion in the people with regard to the “disgusting” case of Satanists. Almost all newspapers called him a “monster” or a “black magician with a gorilla face” (Anonymous 1930d: 1). According to an article with a very suggestive title “Carski pułkownik Czaplín i morfinista Filipowski” (Tsar’s Colonel Czaplín and Filipowski the Morphinomane – translator’s note) published in *Expres Poranny* (Anonymous 1930c: 6), Mr. Czaplín was a 60-year-old “tall, broad-shouldered man of unpleasant gaze and a short ruffled beard.” It was at his apartment at Żeromskiego Street in Żoliborz, Warsaw and at Czyński’s where satanic practices were said to take place.

An anonymous witness (initials: M. S.), introduced to the “satanic mysteries” by Bolesław Wójcicki, a high-rank Martinist (and also one of the

suicides, thus there was no possibility to confirm the following story) told the press: “I have made a week-long preparation for the ceremony, as advised by B. W. [Bolesław Wójcicki – author’s note], which consisted of taking pills and appropriate baths.” He explained, “that but for these measures, narcotics burned during the ritual would negatively influence my health. Only later I did understand that these practices were to put me in a state of ecstasy and to weaken my will. On the given day, I met W. before midnight and we went to Puławska Street. Later, ‘masses’ were taking place at Elektoralna Street. I was led into a small room where I had to take off my coat. A black cloak was put on me and I was given a black mask to cover my face with. I was led into the next room. A group of people was in there – three women and four men – all wearing cloaks and masks. The room was practically empty, to say nothing of ottomans and a thick carpet on the floor. There were inverted triangles with peaks hanging on the walls and a large picture of Baphomet, that is a goat sitting on a globe, between them. In front of it two triangles with bowls made of copper were set, each of them filled with narcotic incense. After several minutes W. appeared, dressed in black vestments with red embroidery of a goat, and wearing a red hat. He was followed by three completely naked women – only their faces were concealed by masks, obviously. They lay on the carpet, shaping a triangle

he was always surrounded with an atmosphere of magic and the occult. He created a Climbing Section of the Zakopane Sports Club “Tatras.” His addiction to morphine contributed to his death in 1934.

10 Newspapers depicting the event quoted witnesses providing only their initials or a brief mention that of a witness’s request of anonymity.

in front of the picture of Baphomet. W. took a position in the centre of this living triangle and looked around the gathered who kneeled and lit the incense and began to say prayers. Prayers so blasphemous and profanatory to the Catholic religion that I find myself unable to cite them. Suddenly, W. stopped. He stepped outside the triangle and went around the gathering, giving each participant a pill. I have received one too, yet I cautiously pretended to swallow it and hid it up the sleeve of my cloak. W. returned to his place. He leaned deeply in front of the hideous picture of the goat – after a while, he was chanting loudly not prayers, but spells, spells that may be found in the fourth tome of ‘Agrippa’s Magic,’ used for evoking the devil. It took a longer while. At moments W. was shouting, calling Satan, begging him to appear, using threats ... Large drops of sweat were dripping down his forehead. Whispers of the gathered accompanied his efforts. And then ... to my surprise ... I most clearly saw a dark shape forming on the wall. The shadow was cloudy at first, but then it took a blurry shape of man with blazing eyes and lips twisted with anger. It wasn’t only my observation, I knew it – a loud moan of something between horror and joy swept through the room. It took a second at most – and the spectre disappeared. The man performing the devilish ritual, all red and covered in sweat, turned to us, casting his mad eye over the gathered. An inhuman voice rattled in his throat, ‘In his name I bless you! Make the offering!’ The silence was broken and the room was filled with squeaks, shouts and hysterical screams of the women. The pills began to demonstrate their power. The three naked women forming the triangle sprang up from the floor and run to their master. A hideous common orgy begun” (Anonymous 1930i: 1).

We do not know whether the eyewitness participated in the orgy himself. If, however, he relates that it was common, we may assume he did. However, the article contains another information I find intriguing, for there he claims he had to sign an agreement binding him to secrecy and adherence to the society in order to be allowed to participate in secret rites. “Driven by curiosity I willingly agreed. A few months before his death, B. W. returned the agreement to me, having forsaken Czyński and Satanism (emphasised by the author)” (Anonymous 1930i: 1). We do not know, then, the cause that drove Wójcicki to his suicide. As press reports ought not to be blindly trusted (which shall be proven further in the text), we may merely assume, that Wójcicki did, in fact, turn his back on Czyński and did forswear the alleged Satanism. Why did he then commit a suicide?

The press went mad. According to *Expres Po-*

*ranny* (Anonymous 1930s: 6), as many as 322 local and Warsaw dailies took the floor on the issue of “Satan’s worshippers.” New scandals emerged every day along with details regarding other conducted searches and interrogations. It was all blasphemous, scandalous, and concerned with the worship of Satan, orgies, and suicides – a truly lethal mixture. What will be left though, if the scandalous phraseology is put aside? There will not be left much, unfortunately, or – what is interesting – a completely contradictory information.

Lucjan Krzyżewski was one of the suicides. A close friend of him, the well-known esotericist Demetriusz Sudowski,<sup>11</sup> wanted to investigate the reason for Krzyżewski’s suicide on his own. *Expres Poranny* (Anonymous 1930q: 6) claims, “Apart from his family, also Mr Demetriusz Sudowski (Nowogrodzka 48) attempted to solve the mystery of his friend’s suicidal death. Together with an attorney at law named Dunin he searched through case files at the municipal court at Poznańska 21. *He said then that leads had been well killed* [emphasised by the author]. All details concerning the suicides unquestionably [for *Expres Poranny* – author’s note] prove that the blame for deaths of these benumbed people lies on the worshippers of Satan.” After the first interrogations of Martinists, the police searched also Sudowski’s apartment, who was neither a Martinist nor a member of Czyński’s order. Nothing was found at his place, yet the press stated then, “Sudowski, who is also into magical practices, had an immense influence on Krzyżewski, and after his death he was investigating files regarding the suicide at court together with an attorney D., said with laughter the following words: *Everything is fine, Lucjan has killed the lead well* [emphasised by the Author]” (Anonymous 1930j: 6). If we compare this quote with the former one, we notice a manipulation. Before searching his apartment Sudowski was a witness to the press, a man in search for the cause of his friend’s suicide claiming leads of Satanists’ complicity in the suicide “had been killed.” Just after the search it turns out that he is more of an accomplice, looking if the leads of the alleged Satanists’ complicity are well erased in the files. But this is just one of numerous instances of deliberate manipulations and lies on the press. Here is some more: For *Expres Poranny* Czyński is “[a] 85-year-old man” (Anonymous 1930u: 6), whereas for *Wiadomości Codzien-*

11 Mieczysław Demetriusz Sudowski (1897–1971), a mystic and an occultist born in Warsaw, the author of “The Tarot – A Contemporary Course of the Quintessence of Hermetic Occultism”, published in London in 1962, and other writings exploring the subject of, among others, yoga. He was more known under the esoteric nom de plume Mouni Sadhu.

ne, he is “[a] man of 90 years of age, yet looking like a 60-year-old, at the most” (Anonymous 1930k: 1). Czesław Czyński was born in 1858, and, therefore, in the discussed year 1930 he was 72.

Initials of the suicides are confused. One newspaper releases only an abbreviated name, e.g., “Krzywski” instead of “Krzyżewski” in order to “protect the family name” and other journals follow it, producing “Krzywski.”

Anyone interested in the occult or published writings on this subject becomes a Satanist straightaway, or is, at least, considered closely connected to “Satan worshippers,” as it was, for instance, in the case of Karol Chobot (1886–1937). *Polska* newspaper (Anonymous 1930l: 5) claims, “Czyński and his ‘adepts’ with aid of a certain Mr. Wojciechowski maintained a direct contact with the sect of Andrzej Huszna, the so-called Polish National Catholic Church in Dąbrowa Górnicza and esoteric organisations in the Upper Silesia, primarily with Chobot, a manager in a publishing company in Katowice.” Chobot sends corrections to all significant editorial offices and, luckily for him, some of them admitted his right by stating, “[l]astly, for unknown reason, Mr. Chobot was entangled in the case. He, as far as we are concerned, has been constantly assailing Czyński in his periodical *Odrodzenie*” (Anonymous 1930e: 2). Andrzej Huszno (1892–1939) was less fortunate. Only one local daily, *Expres Zagłębia*, published his correction, where he claimed, “[s]candals concerning my person declared in the newspaper *Polska* and re-printed in *Expres Zagłębia* are thoroughly untrue, as I have neither heard nor knew of any Polish sect of Satan’s worshippers. I have maintained no relations with Czesław Czyński, direct or indirect. I do not know of any connections binding Mr Czyński and Wojciechowski. Yet, the latter, a former associate of *Głos Ziemowida*, left my place in March 1926 and I have not worked with him since. I have nothing in common with Chobot’s organisation and his publishing house. I have not moved to Katowice, since I still live in Dąbrowa Górnicza. Till now I have been a parish priest of the Polish National Church in Dąbrowa Górnicza and I have not heard of any dismissal from this position, which anyone may learn himself by joining us for Sunday Mass” (Huszno 1930: 3 and Anonymous 1930b: 3).

The Mariavite Church<sup>12</sup> was under attack at that time. Beginning with the comparison of cloaks used by Martinists to that of Mariavites, and ending

with a drivel such as, “last of all, it should be mentioned the contact between the Martinist sect and the Mariavites, who were even to celebrate ‘black masses’ behind the main altar of their ‘church’ in Płock” (Anonymous 1930a: 6).

During the search of Czyński’s apartment a list of members of the Martinist Order was found which infused the press with another load of scandal. The readership learned, that the satanic sect generally operates in the entire Poland. Main tentacles of this “demonic octopus” reached as far as Zakopane and Sosnowiec. In almost all premises searched by the police “blasphemous tools as rapiers, cloaks, masks” were found. The essence of the blasphemous of these objects has not been explained. Iconoclastic books were also found, such as “Prawda o matce Bożej,” consisting of elements hostile to the Catholic Church and “Satanistyczny hymn Szymona maga” published in *Expres Poranny* (1930q: 1). These materials provide no sufficient evidence to bring a legal action, as shall be shown in the further part of the text.

Below I present a brief note of some other alleged participants of “satanic proceedings.” Zakopane was said to be represented by Bogdan Filipowski, who “was considered in Warsaw a morphine addict. He was a passionate eulogist of Czyński. He made a living from delivering lectures on secret knowledge and magical practices. Being a resident of Zakopane, Filipowski visited Warsaw only occasionally. Unfortunately, he is a man of good family” (Anonymous 1930c: 6). We do not know, whether the fact of being “of good family” was found unfortunate by the mentioned family or by *Expres Poranny*.

Sosnowiec was the place of residence of Stanisław Sławomir Kozłowski (Jastrzębiec coat-of-arms; residing at 1 Maja Street), considered as Czyński’s deputy. It was at his apartment where during a search a “blasphemous arsenal” was found, depicted as “a number of ritual devices and accessories, such as swords decorated with mysterious inscriptions, a portable altar for celebrating blasphemous masses made of two inverted triangles with a portrait of Mr. Kozłowski in the middle. Moreover, a few red fezzes and ceremonial vestments were also found. A considerable collection of dissolute pornographic photographs was confiscated from Kozłowski, unveiling his previously unknown fancy. The police have also found a considerable amount of objects connected with the Martinist sect” (Anonymous 1930b: 3). Indeed, Kozłowski was a Martinist of high rank and he often communicated with Czyński. Rafał Prinke saw a copy of a book from 1912 by G. O. Mebes with the author’s special inscription for Kozłowski (Prinke 1991: 21).

12 For more information on this community see: Mames (2009) and on the connection between the Mariavites and the occult see: Łagosz (2010).

In 1923, Kozłowski founded legal units of occult freemasonry under the name of “*Łoża Rycerzy Duchy – Polskie Towarzystwo Okultystyczno-Filozoficzne*” (The Lodge of Knights of the Spirit – Polish Occult-Philosophical Society) led by the Great Logde (Hass 1984: 329) in Królewska Huta (currently Chorzów). In the years 1924–1925, the periodical *Świątynia* (Temple) was published there, which I did not manage to find. In the hermetic community of Silesian Martinists were Prosper Szmurło, Dr. Guzowski, J. Bogucki, and Waclaw Zagierski. Pasquins on Kozłowski were appearing in almost every daily newspaper. His reply to the charges appeared only in one local paper as well as his answer to the accusations. “Last afternoon, among many other telephone calls concerning our rumours, we received a call from Mr. Kozłowski, who declared to have nothing in common with any sects at that time, and the more with a sect of Devil’s worshippers. Once he indeed participated in a Martinist sect and communicated with Czesław Czyński, arrested in Warsaw. Mr. Kozłowski claims that objects confiscated from his apartment have nothing to do with any sectarian rituality whatsoever, being solely a decoration.”<sup>13</sup> Some periodicals released an additional mention, that Kozłowski (magical name: Dr. Petersen) was severely ill and the police obliged him not to leave the city. The information I have collected implies that in the time of the described events Mr Kozłowski was paralysed. I do not know then, how he could have participated in orgies and “black masses.” But that fact did not matter to the press.

Yet the one most severely “battered in the satanic struggle” was Mikołaj Mikołajewicz Czaplín, mentioned at the beginning. “He was a Russian officer, sent to the reserve shortly before the World War. Mobilised during the war, he was a leader of a troop in a mass levy (*ratniki opolczenja*) formed in Mozyrz. Due to various misuses in the maintenance division, he was dismissed from the regular army. In 1919, he joined the troops of General Bałachowicz, where for a time he was responsible for the artillery supply. Yet, just after a few weeks, General Bałachowicz dismissed Czaplín without specifying any motives. Czaplín was operating in Warsaw in the beginning of the year 1923. At first, he procured

a retirement and obtained a restoration concession. Nevertheless, he withdrew from the agreement concerning the latter and began to practice magic, divination, selling the “elixir of life,” and so forth. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man of unpleasant gaze and a short ruffled beard. He was in close contact with Czyński. He was always a man of bad reputation” (Anonymous 1930c: 6). According to *Gazeta Warszawska* (Anonymous 1930p: 6), Czaplín chose for his partner a well-known charlatan, Bogdan Filipowski, who was said to have been caught on an unsuccessful attempt to evoke Mahatma’s ghost acted by Filipowski’s friend dressed in a sheet. His other helper was Bolesław Wójcicki, a physical caricature of a human being. One of his eyes was situated markedly below the other, almost on the cheek. It was a peculiar trio: a “physical caricature of a human being” and a “black magician with a gorilla face.” Indeed, the Devil himself had to dwell in this group, since most of the members were women and Czaplín, as reported, was highly popular among women. It was him, who was said most of all to have organised in a specially prepared chapel “erotic orgies in white morphine hazes, blinding with its endless debauchery, filled with sadism.”

After the first scandalous and devilish-stinking articles, the time has come for a summary. When it turned out that since his dismissal from the Martinist Order, that is, since 1926, Czyński had not been in contact with the main suspect, i.e., Czaplín, the press began to consider a possible existence of two separate Satanism-propagating organisations. “Currently we may state, that there were two separate Satanist organisations operating in Poland. One of them, whose members were in possession of the afore mentioned crosses [crosses with a supposed twisted image of Christ], formed a sort of diabolic church – the other one was Czyński’s organisation. As we found out, Czyński’s successor, Mikołaj Czaplín, laid the blame on his former master and explained himself with the fact, that having parted with Czyński, he created the so-called “Order of the Cross,” which was said to engage in white magic. Members of this sect wore white cloaks, similar to the Mariavite, in order to differentiate themselves from Martinists” (Anonymous 1930h: 1).

It seems weird considering, that when Czyński left the Martinist Order, it was Czaplín who took over this organisation. How could he, then, disassociate himself from his order? This might well be if we presume, that the “Order of the Cross” never existed or was a secret institution within the Martinist Order; which is highly improbable. Considering, that Czyński was dismissed from the Martinist Order for popularising sex magic, what would have

<sup>13</sup> Anonymous (1930g: 3). One should note that Kozłowski’s explanation, that magical accessories found at his apartment served merely as a decoration, seems unconvincing. Bogusław Bałos drew my attention to the fact, that red fezzes are used by freemasons of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. Probably this is where his titles, such as “Distinguished Professor at Bukhara Academy of Hermetic Sciences” or “Knight Member of the Order of the Green Emir in Bukhara” originate from.

happened, if he had intended to change the Christian nature of Martinism to a satanic one?

Before we proceed to the next part of this discussion, we shall analyse the opinion of Stanisław Milewski who studied this matter on the records and articles published in the press at that time (Milewski 1981: 22–25). “Crime news experienced its prime in 1870s, yet soon they again began to undergo a sort of degeneration. At first, they were supposed to teach the readership, that crime doesn’t pay, then this didacticism has been subordinated to scandals. Often competition resulted in exaggeration of even minor facts, making the story published in the press less scandalous and more terrifying. Newspapers were accused of pessimism and defeatism. This matter was zany, yet aptly depicted by Prus, who wrote in one of his feuilletons, ‘[e]ven if the current year was the most horrible year in the history, it would never keep up with what newspapers write about it’ ... This weakness of the readership and horror was used by newsboys. *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* presented several typical examples. They were shouting, for instance, ‘Bismarck’s dead! Horrible crime in Praga [a borough of Warsaw]!’ – yet readers found inside the paper an obituary note reporting death of a smith called Bismarck, who was killed in Praga by ... a cat, which was well-taught to mouse.” “News of robberies, thieveries, ‘terrifying catastrophes,’ advertised by newsboys usually welcome passers-by after breakfast. It begins in the early morning and continues till late night” – snorted *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*.

Certainly, we ought to keep our scientific distance and not claim in advance that everything written on Czyński, Czaplina, and other main characters involved in the “satanic scandal” were lies. Nevertheless, most of them might be described as a mixture of facts and confabulations.

When the first “wave” of rumours pertaining to the satanic scandal has passed, articles began to adopt a milder tone. *Kurier Metapsychiczny*, a supplement published by *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, presented the afore mentioned event in a completely different light. “Czyński, of whom no one outside Warsaw has heard of for years, has again become a focus of attention due to the detection of some ‘occult-satanic’ practices that were said to be supported by Czyński against a remuneration. It is the authorities’ thing to investigate how much truth and how much fantasy is in fact in the alerts of the press, *provided the police and the court are really interested in the case* [emphasised by the author; it is clear, that even in the course of events the authenticity of the information concerning the process was questioned]. It might be that there really ex-

isted a group of (mentally ill) individuals seeking new excitements in imitating magical practices of former days, who employed cabalistic and astrological symbols; it might be that as a result some of them, psychopaths and hysterics lost their self-control completely: no larger city lacks in such defective individuals, fantasts, and snobs pleased to stupefy themselves with narcotics and platitudes of the ‘secret knowledge’.”<sup>14</sup>

There is another noteworthy article, which was published in *Kurier Metapsychiczny* on September 29, 1930, after the press finished the “persecution of Satanists.” Due to its great significance, I shall cite here almost the entire text (in translation):

One of the notable Warsaw meta-psychologists [unfortunately, I have not succeeded in finding the name] to whom we’ve turned regarding this matter, has replied: Almost everyone listed in the press with relations to “Satanism” is known to me in person (Wójcicki, Rostkowski, Czaplina, Wojciechowski, Filipowski, Kozłowski, Nawrocki, Bloch, Trojanowski, Wotowski, etc.). I’ve encountered Czyński for the first time 30 years ago. Later, I’ve been seeing him every now and then over the period of 1918–1926. Over the last years, I haven’t. *I don’t believe he was a Satanist* [emphasised by the author], still it is beyond question that he was a Martinist of a higher rank and a Gnostic, which obviously mustn’t be associated with Satanism. He made a rather good impression. I’ve known numerous adherents devoted to Czyński, yet I’ve never met not a single person who would complain on Czyński. His enemies, which I’ve also met, didn’t know him in person and were outraged by his alleged unethical behaviour towards others, whom they didn’t even know. As far as I’m concerned, Czyński lived in a small way, and in his last years he even lived in want and, for instance, he had to switch his apartment for a smaller one in order to collect a certain sum of money. Not so long ago, Czyński was severely ill, threatened with blindness. For a longer time, until a successful surgery was carried out, he couldn’t read at all. He resigned from public performance long ago and didn’t organise any gatherings at his place, ceasing his activity, and resigning from the position of the master of Martinist Order in Poland. Modest commissions of 5 złoty became his source of income. He charged such sum for determining the character, skills, as well as the future and the past, in a way, with use of palmistry and graphology<sup>[15]</sup> – his opinions usually proved to

14 Anonymous (1930f). It is worth mentioning here, that *Kurier Metapsychiczny* was edited by Ludwik Szczepański (1872–1954), a well-known poet, a writer, and a journalist and – moreover – the founder and the first editor of the Cracovian literary periodical *Życie* (1897–1900) bringing together the majority of the writers of that time, especially poets and critics. As interested also in the occult, he took several positions on this subject. For more information on Szczepański see Mikołajko (2010).

15 Here I would like to present a longer text confirming some of the pieces of information presented here. Mieczysław

be correct and his treatment was often healing and effective when applied with suggestion, magnetism, and electric currents, as I have heard. Over his last days, especially when he became ill, he most probably received aid from his niece, who lived with him and ran a beauty parlour. *I consider tales of his orgies bold lies invented out of malice* [emphasised by the author]. I wholeheartedly agree, that the press has been writing tall stories to report every rumour ... Possession of a “pentagram” or a triangle was regarded as an irrefutable proof of practicing the satanic cult. Engaging in magical operations and evocations of alleged “geniuses,” etc. was viewed as an act of summoning the devil. Certainly, it is not out of question that some small groups of half-intelligent hysterics deprived of criticism were organising parodies of black masses for erotic purposes. Yet, what does it have to do with Czyński, the Martinists, or the occult? *I do doubt, if any legal action has actually taken place* [emphasised by the author] (Anonymous 1930r: 12).

Actually, there was no trial, indeed.<sup>16</sup> As I have already mentioned, the blasphemous finds of swords, masks, or cloaks were not, at least, in the eyes of investigators an evidence sufficient to commence legal proceedings. Additionally, it should be mentioned that the only suicide related to Czyński took place in 1924, and, as it was reported later in the press, “... weird ceremonies and meetings were taking place at Czyński’s apartment, though the

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Sudowski – as I have already emphasised – who knew Czyński personally, relates his last years of life with the following words: “A couple of years before Czynski’s death, I tried to visit him so as to chat about some practical use of Hermetic teachings. But the only way to see him was by acquiring a ticket to have one’s fortune told by him as he took up this profession in the last years of his life. He did not accept visitors under any other conditions. Having no choice, I arranged such a session and called on him in the company of one of my friends. We were both members of an active occult lodge. We had to buy blue triangular tickets some weeks in advance, stating exactly the day and hour of the visit. Czyński received us with a cold and stiff attitude. I saw an old but quite virile man with a very expressive and rather handsome face, long white hair and moustache and without any trace of baldness. The features and strong chin spoke of will-power and self-possession beyond anything I had seen previously in other occultists. He flatly refused to speak about anything except our palms. Our assertions that we had nothing to do with any official organizations and only wanted to ask him to explain to us some complicated questions, which we then could not solve by our own efforts, were of no use. Incidentally, what we wanted to know concerned the technique of the conscious and full exteriorization of the astrosome. But, the eyes of Czyński, piercing and full of a weird light, looked at us without any emotion or sympathy. It seemed as if they were saying to us: ‘Let me do what you paid for, and leave me alone!’ The atmosphere created was so unpleasant that we preferred to leave ...” (Sadhu 1970: 128).

16 This is confirmed by one of the first researchers of the history of “Polish Satanists,” Rafał Prinke (1986).

meetings were suspended due to Czyński’s illness – in regard to the turmoil resulting from the latest rumours – the authorities deemed it appropriate to administer a search” (Anonymous 1930n: 1). Thus, the search was related to the “frenzy” over Satanists and not to a real evidence.

The satanic scandal vanished from the press just as quickly as it appeared. Undoubtedly, if a trial really had taken place, all newspapers would have reported the newest information from the Court, even more scandalous than the preliminary investigation. No information regarding discontinuation of the investigation or even a mention of insufficient evidence for initiating a legal action was reported. Only *Kurier Metapsychiczny*, a supplement published by *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*, has shown an objective information in the above mentioned articles. However, other dailies have not reprinted this text. Since then, Czyński has entered Polish literature as the founder of Polish Satanism.

In 1930, a book written by Janina Walicka, titled “Satanści” (Satanists) appeared presenting Czyński as a black magician leading a Satan-worshipping sect and making financial profits from it. The events are also depicted in a thriller named “Sekta djabła” (The Devil’s Sect) written by the contemporary expert in esoteric literature, Stanisław A. Wotowski (1933). The author presents himself in the book (under the name of Różyć) fighting bravely against a black magician, Dr. Oskar Wryński, and his society called the “Association of Reborn Brothers and Sisters.” The mentioned “black magician” is no one else but Czesław Czyński, whose spiritual name was transformed in the novel from Punar Bhava into Kunar Thava. The book entangles facts with mythological stories. The authentic biography of Czyński, who was lying in the grave at that time, presented on pages 45–47 is noteworthy. Still, in the case of this novel, one ought to note, that the author has been non-secretly fascinated with Czyński’s magical skills.

The fictional “Association of Reborn Brothers and Sisters” is in fact the authentic Ordo Albi Orientis we are interested in. According to Wotowski, its real aim was to praise Satan under the name of Simon, as well as to popularise Gnosis,<sup>17</sup> that is – as

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17 “Problematic aspects of gnosis are one of the most difficult and mysterious research areas of the contemporary religious studies. Until recently, basic information regarding gnosis was drawn from patristic texts (especially those of St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Hippolytus of Rome, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen Adamantius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Epiphanius, Ephraem the Syrian, and St. Augustine) characterised by a highly polemical or even hostile attitude towards gnosis” (Hoffmann 1995: 102). Precisely this kind of highly hostile

the author reveals – G(nosticus) N(astur) O(mnis) S(ciencia) I(n) S(atana). Among the contemporary literature on this subject, a book called “Diabeł w kulturze polskiej” (Rożek 1993) ought to be mentioned. Here, on the pages 273–274, the author depicts satanic cults in Poland. Unfortunately, Rożek also erroneously mentions, just like the others, the trial in which Czyński was said to have testified.

The first researcher to study the life of Czesław Czyński was Lech Emfazy Stefański, together with Jerzey Wałczak and Piotr Hausman. In the monodrama called “Adept wysokiej magii” (An Adept of High Magic; 1990) the life of this esotericist was in detail presented, grounded not only on press articles but also on the testimony of Czyński’s granddaughter, Zofia Czyńska. Nevertheless, it was a monodrama acted on the stage. We did not find there, then, any references to source texts, dispute with facts, and scientific objectivity. Czyński’s life has not been presented in a scientific way until Rafał Prinke wrote the articles “Doktor Punar Bhava i polscy sataniści” (Dr. Punar Bhava and Polish Satanists; 1986) and “Polnischer Satanismus und Sexualmagie” (Polish Satanism and Sex Magic; 1991), showing that the trial of Satanists never actually took place. Prinke is, therefore, the first to have emphasised this matter.

Of course, there is also the abundance of Catholic articles, which will not be cited here. They tend to replicate the stereotypical image of Czyński as a high priest of a satanic sect and add nothing new. One ought to note, that in the novel of Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz “Kariera Nikodema Dyzmy” (The Career of Nicodemus Dyzma) sex orgies taking place in a certain apartment in Warsaw were modelled on stories of Czyński’s *Ordo Albi Orientis*.

Even after his death, Czyński was associated with Satanism by *Tajny Detektyw*. “The weekly magazine suggested, that Lieutenant Uchnast’s suicide could have been related with actions of a satanic sect. For in Uchnast’s documents the name ‘Dr. Bruze’ was found. The name was used by a mysterious man living in a residence in Gołąbki, a district in Warsaw, where weird parties with presence of Varsovians were said to take place. The name appeared also on a business card found at a physician’s residing at Dobra Street, who had committed suicide several years earlier. ‘The physician was organising at his apartment games and orgies, to which he used to invite various women. He was

selecting a victim among them, whom he deceitfully put to sleep in order to perform on her miscellaneous practices’ – informed *Tajny Detektyw*. Most probably, the physician was connected with the Polish offshoot of masonic Martinist Order, led by Czesław Czyński under the name of Punar Bhava” (Gass 2011). Unfortunately, we do not know who the mentioned mysterious Dr. Bruze was and why – if he did – he participated in Czyński’s organisation.

I would like to analyse two major reasons that contributed to the association of Czyński with Satan and the satanic cult. The first are the suicides of students or members of the Order, the second is the piece of paper found near the deceased and which connects all cases of suicides.

Let us begin with the piece of paper. The only one I have encountered in my research was a reproduction of the sheet found near the body of Krzyżewski, published in *Expres Poranny* on August 28, 1930. I am not able then to tell whether the inscription “under Satan’s command” was also on the sheets found near the other suicides. There is no such writing on the mentioned sheet found near Krzyżewski. There is though an inscription saying “a return to the absolute – to nirvana,” as well as the letters alpha and omega, the letter *shin* – the attracting element, and “1930” with a postscript “warm and humid” (presumably concerning the weather that year). Below another date is visible “9th April, 1930” – which, as I suppose, is the date of the committed suicide. In the upper left corner a square is visible (it is not a magical square but a kind of cipher – thus, as I presume, the weird inscription *remlagracja*) with a set of incomprehensible figures and letters below.

We do know what gave the press the most “sinister” impression was the letter *shin* visible on all six sheets. The digit *sh* is the 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet with a numerical value of 300. The press claimed it to be the symbol of *Sheloshet* – that is, of Satan. Yet it is not entirely true. The letter *shin* represents also the spirit of the world and the understanding of life. In this context, the words on the sheet “a return to the absolute”<sup>18</sup> seem more understandable. The letter *shin* may be analysed at three levels: the real level is the understanding of life, the spiritual level – the spirit of the world –, and the mystical level – the spirit of God. *Shin* would be then the understanding of the intelligence, the spirit, and the soul operating on three levels of consciousness, yet not separately. One should also remember that the suicides were members of the Martinist Order, whose declaration from 1921 says, “[l]et us re-

attitude towards Gnostic sciences and even towards the very notion of Gnosticism, which was equaled with Satanism, was exhibited by almost all individuals depicting the condition of Polish esotericism in the 20th century.

18 “Nirvana” and “absolute” could be concepts borrowed from Theosophy, highly popular at that time.

call, that Christ is represented by the letter *shin* and that the word *Shin*, the Symbol of Christ, should be in our eyes the Border of Balance and the Border of Harmony, reconciling two contradictory elements: Good and Evil, Matter and Spirit, Darkness and Light.” It is a more Gnostic view claiming that Christ is a reconciliation of good and evil, and, therefore, an ultimate and absolute good does not exist and evil is intrinsic with good. Nevertheless, the letter itself is associated with Jesus.

I have drawn Prof. Jerzy Ochmann’s<sup>19</sup> attention to the question of an analysis of the Hebrew letter *shin*. Owing to his help, my inquiry was passed to the exceptionally clever Ms. Ksenia Kosakowska, his former student. This way I have received a highly substantial reply, which will be replicated in the following:

Dear Professor,

I have received an answer from Tzfat [the city of Safed], where I have been to on Sabbath – in Meron on the day of Lag BaOmer. I have made use of opinions of several cabalists of those lands, as well as of my own knowledge. The association with Satan is a mistake, because, although we think Jews, just as everybody else, use the name of Satan, in the Hebrew writing this name begins with H: *ha-Satan* (“the Satan”). Thus, it is beyond question, that it was not the letter used for referring to Satan. ... The letter *shin* used in all the cases, in my humble opinion, as well as in the opinion of three cabalists from Tzfat, refers to Shekhinah (שכינה), a word of Chaldean origin meaning *the presence of divine element in the world*.

If we would really assume, that Czesław Czyński dealt with Kabbalah on his own and dragged his students into this ... it led to negative consequences. The great Jewish philosopher, Chaim Luzzatto, in his book “Derech HaShem” – “Way of God” – implies that a human being is like a vessel. If too much light of the supernatural knowledge pours into a man, he will be unable to control it and thus he will shatter into pieces. It refers to attempts of “toying” with Kabbalah by individuals who are not prepared for dealing with it. Some committed suicides: Sabbatai Zevi at the end of his road, for instance. Others suffered inexplicable pain of the abdomen and died in torment (medical diagnosis: ileus). Thus, in my opinion, the letter *shin* was left by adepts of that philosopher, was exactly a reference to the symbol of Shekhinah. Undoubtedly, it had nothing in common with Satan! I hope this

will help in view that I have asked all cabalists respected in Tzfat, who adamantly stated that the letter *shin* could not have referred to Satan.

And so was my first reaction, since even *Sefer Jecira* mentions, that the letter *shin* is a letter of fire – the word *esh* (fire), with three “sticks” turned upwards, derives from it. Another interpretation is that *shin* is simply the first letter in one of the names of God, (*El*) *Shaddai*.

The *tefillin*<sup>[20]</sup> have the letter *shin* written on both sides, the first letter of the Hebrew word *Shaddai* – Almighty. This word is comprised of three letters: *shin*, *dalet*, and *yod*. The letter *shin* on the right side of the head *tefillah* has three “sticks” and on the left four (the letter *shin* resembles an upside-down E or the Russian letter *sha*). The knot of the head *tefillah* resembles the letter *dalet* (in the shape of a reversed L), and the letter *yod* (in the shape of a comma) is represented by the knot at the end of the strap. The strap of the arm-*tefillah* resembles the letter *shin* and *dalet*, and the knot at its end represents the shape of *yod* (letter from Kosakowska to Ochmann – in author’s collection).

So, as we may clearly see, the letter *shin* not necessarily had to be identified with Satan. Czyński then possibly was not involved in Satanist practices. Undoubtedly, he was interested in Kabbalah. I have managed to find a letter from Czyński to his master G. Encausse (Papus), which mentions in the ending of the enigmatic fragment in the third part of Adam Mickiewicz’s “Dziady” (Forefathers’ Eve) – the famous words “[a]nd his name will be forty and four.” “For the last fifty years philosophers, critics, and scholars, including myself, have been racking their brains to decipher this mystery. And suddenly, a master of Kabbalah, Butatar, S .. I .. (the secretary of state, Mr. Georgij Ostapowicz von Mebes), emerges in Saint Petersburg, suggesting the right way, so that we both succeeded in solving this problem for the glory of the occult with no trace of Positivism.”<sup>21</sup> Moreover, he asks in the letter for him and Mebes to be honoured with the highest cabalistic ranks existing in Martinism.

The letter *shin* should be then analysed with reference to Kabbalah and without any relations to Satan or Satanism.

There is, lastly, the most significant issue that has not been explained yet – the suicides, of course. Sadly, we do not know much on this subject. What was the reason for undertaking so dramatic means by the members of the Order? The press claimed, that the reason was the dissolute practices applied during the alleged black masses, which, however, is

19 Prof. Jerzy Ochmann, PhD, is a member of the Polish Association for Jewish Studies, the International Association for the Study of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe, Institut International d’Études Européennes Antonio Rosmini, Polish Society for the Study of Religions, and a coworker of the Commission for Polish Jewish History and Culture of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has been honoured for his scientific achievements with the Gold and the Silver Cross of Merit, the Medal of the Commission of National Education, and the Cross of the Order of Rebirth of Poland.

20 Ritual Hebrew device – two black leather boxes with inscriptions from Torah inside.

21 Czyński’s letter to the High Council of the Martinist Order (5486(25) 57, August 1910; in the author’s collection).

questioned by people who knew Czyński.<sup>22</sup> According to the above sources, there have never been orgies or Sabbaths. What is more, we know that Czyński was never tried.

Lech E. Stefański et al. shed a little light on the subject. In the book “Adept wysokiej magii” (An Apprentice of High Magic) one can read, “[n]o one remembers today how much blood was spilt. Not a coloured water, but true, precious human blood. And not during our Mysteries, which were in fact large-scale magical operations. Their significant aim was unknown to the majority of participants – they took part in something they didn’t comprehend. Just as a bricklayer’s helper doesn’t know, and he doesn’t need to know, plans of a building he aids to erect” (Stefański et al. 1990: 37 f.).

Unfortunately, we do not know the source of this information and – most probably – it will remain unknown. Lech E. Stefański died at Stare Załubice, Poland on December 21st, 2010. However, one ought to assume that the suicides were of a ritual character. The suicides, whose aim was a great magical operation following the trail of Stefański. What was this operation to bring about? Is it possible, that “adepts” willingly sacrificed themselves for their master,<sup>23</sup> so that he could reach a certain predetermined aim known only to him?

The inscription “a return to the absolute – to nirvana” on the sheet, I personally consider high-

ly intriguing. In the Buddhist view, nirvana is the aim of a human life and the end to all suffering on equal terms with liberation from the circle of reincarnations. It means a destruction of a desire. What a weird relation could exist then between this idea and magic, Kabbalah, suicide, and a great magical operation? An expert on the subject of Buddhism, J. Sieradzan, provides an interpretation of a suicide from a Buddhist point of view. In Buddhism it is the intention that decides what is good or bad. Therefore, reasons driving us to certain deeds and the condition we are in at that time may turn a suicide into a right thing. “Admittedly, Buddha was not talking anyone into suicide, still the meditation on the feeling of disgust and repulsion for one’s own body as something impure, which he ordered the monks before leaving for a two-week isolation, ended tragically for several tens of monks. Over two days about 30–40 monks took their lives” (Sieradzan 2005: 431). Nevertheless, it ought to be strongly emphasised that Buddha ordered every monk who approved of or persuaded anyone to such act to be excluded from the community.

We do know that the system of O. T. O., adopted by Punar Bhava in his Ordo Albi Orientis, was largely based on Tantra of an indo-sufi origin. What was then this mysterious magical operation, which demanded such a great amount of energy emitted (according to magicians) in the moment of dying? Supposing Stefański et al.’s thesis is real, did Czyński use it for some specific goals chosen by himself?

Let us now examine Anton Szandor LaVey’s view on the matter of suicide and human sacrifice. In “The Satanic Bible” the founder of the Church of Satan states unequivocally: “Life is an indulgence, death an abstinence. For a person who is satisfied with his earthly existence, life is like a party, and no one likes to leave a good party. Similarly if a person is enjoying himself here on earth, he will not so readily give up his life for the promise of an after-life about which he knows nothing” (1969: 137). Satanism as a philosophy and a religion condemns those who coax others into committing a suicide. For Satanism glorifies earthly life and treats every use of authority aiming to persuade someone to suicide as one of the heaviest crimes against life and human freedom. As for the practice of human sacrifice (which has not taken place in case of Czyński) LaVey emphasises (1969: 70): “The only time a Satanist would perform a human sacrifice would be if it were to serve a twofold purpose; that being to release the magician’s wrath in the throwing of a curse, and more important, to dispose of a totally obnoxious and deserving individual.” LaVey additionally marks that human sacrifice has a symbolic role.

22 Eugeniusz Jasiewicz, Czyński’s apprentice, who was introduced to the magician by Henryk Bloch, in his letter to Rafał Prinke (February 17, 1983; author’s collection) recalls, “I don’t believe Czyński was a Satanist, as his orthodox opponents used to tell. I had the chance to watch his idealistic activity and I may state that he was an ethical man. He had enemies who would stop at nothing. His characteristic trait was that he never defended himself against mischievous accusations.” Jasiewicz was one of the last living adepts of Czyński with whom Prinke managed to establish contact.

23 We do know that Czyński was a high-rank O. T. O. member. As stressed by researchers, the creation of O. T. O. was notably influenced by the German order called the Freemasonic Order of the Golden Centurium (*Freimaurerischer Orden der Goldenen Centurie*). This is interesting, especially due to the fact that some of its members were Poles. Many sources indicate, that the organisation was “very dark” in its form. The order was founded in 1840 in Munich by rich German industrialists and citizens. It was a Luciferic-demonic community, whose rituals included contacting demons: Astaroth, Belial and Azmodan. A contact with these powers were said to ensure own power and wealth. The name “Centurium” was the Latin equivalent for the number 100. It was a reference to the number of members, though in fact the organisation always consisted of 99 individuals. Once a year, a new member was selected and another one had to leave. If no one had died over the year, one person was chosen in a lottery to sacrifice himself. It is not out of question that here we may find a parallel? For more information on the Freemasonic Order of the Golden Centurium see Flowers (1994: 25).

It is substantial in this context, that the “real” Satanism – at least in official publications – does not persuade anyone to commit suicide and does not approve of it in any way. Of course, we deal also with another side of Satanism, which does not forswear human sacrifice. LaVey himself was to have said once that he was too weak for a true Satanist. One should not jump to conclusions suicides in Satanism basing on commercial texts created by the founder of the Church of Satan.

The press of those days, as I have already mentioned, claimed the suicides to be a result of the hysteria and nervous breakdown of the participants of secret rituals. “Even putting Czyński aside, we must note that his apprentices applied black magic practices – which is synonymous to Satanism.<sup>[24]</sup> Obviously, being unable to come into contact with spirits and learning from their master that taking cocaine, morphine, and performing blasphemous practices is obligatory to evoke lower-level beings, such as elementals, demons, and moreover, even Satan himself, his students eagerly chose this path. They became perverts, degenerates, one step to a suicide! Some of them took their own lives in moments of horror, seeing how far they had floundered, others were suggested this thought in fear of inconvenient relations” (Anonymous 1930o: 1).

Supposing the above is true, the piece of paper found near all the deceased raises doubts. There is no mention of a letter left by the suicides. Since as many as six suicides took place, a trace, a record, or a document proving their reasons ought to have been preserved. Yet, none has been found. Thus, one might get an impression that these suicides were not accidental and were linked with a common motive.

A suicide, as a kind of a wilful death, in a culture shaped by Christianity is perceived as a violation of the laws of nature, a serious sin, and cowardice. Because of that, suicides have been refused to be given a religious burial; they have become – after death – outcasts. However, as it is known, in other cultures (ancient Rome, Japan) in certain circumstances it was a sort of honourable and dignified death, requiring certain strength of character and courage.

In search for any mentions regarding causes and motives of the suicides, I have found an article of the following content: “The most grim element of Czyński’s career in Warsaw is the suicide committed in 1924 by the late Wł. Ż., a young student and a son of a professor at Warsaw University of Technology. Wł. Ż., rest his soul, a nationalist and a de-

vout Catholic, seeing the youth dragged into masonic organisations, decided to investigate this matter and uncover masonic secrets. With this aim in view, he began to study masonic literature and to collect masonic emblems and insignia. He himself joined Czyński and his young followers to examine the case in the source. At that time, he told one of his colleagues he was close to reveal secrets that would put masonic proceedings<sup>[25]</sup> among the youth in a brandnew light. Several weeks after this conversation, the late Wł. Ż. committed suicide. It took place in extraordinary circumstances. Several hours earlier, Wł. Ż. was walking across his apartment as in a trance. Suddenly, he entered his room, knelt at the table, and knifed himself in the heart. Only at the very moment of thrusting the knife in his flesh, Wł. Ż. did emerge from the weird condition he had been in for several hours. With his last strength he crawled to his mother’s feet, kissed it, whispered, ‘they’ve killed me’ and with a prayer on his lips, he died. A suicide of the crosscut religious boy committed under circumstances requiring exceptionally strong suicidal will (piercing one’s chest with a knife is something more than just pulling the trigger) – only one supposition comes to the mind, that Wł. Ż. acted under an exceptionally strong hypnosis. A hypnosis that must have been cast by the one who found out why Wł. Ż. was collecting the information on the masonry, who could not allow it to be published at any price” (Anonymous 1930t: 5).

A careful reader of this article could not omit the afore-cited information:

- initials of the suicide do not match in any way names listed at the beginning of the text;
- no piece of paper with the sinister letter *shin* was found near the deceased;
- as the article suggests, Wł. Ż. was under hypnosis, he did not want to commit a suicide, as he even allegedly claimed, “they’ve killed me,” thus he could not have participated in the magical proceedings suggested by L. E. Stefański et al. (1990: 37–38).

We may find an affirmation of the initials Wł. Ż. in yet another article: “*Mysterious murders* [emphasised by the author] of some Warsaw students, among others Wł. Ż., the son of a professor at Warsaw University of Technology, are said to be connected to this felonious organisation” (Anonymous

24 This is undoubtedly only in the view of the editorship of *Wiedomości Codzienne*, for black magic does not have to be connected with the cult of Satan and, therefore, with Satanism.

25 Here we may observe a deliberate intention of the author to connect Czyński’s actions with the masonry, though obviously Martinism does not belong to the regular masonry. Nevertheless, classifying Satanism, magic, Martinism, and masonry as one was and still is used for presenting all the above in a common unfavourable light.

1930m: 4). It is, therefore, another (seventh) suicide associated with Czesław Czyński. However, in this case the suicide was said to be hypnotised so as to take secrets of the organisation to the grave.

I have asked Bogusław Bałos,<sup>26</sup> a friend of mine, to examine the aims of suicide. Here is his opinion: “I doubt if the energy released by deaths (that occurred non-simultaneously in different places) could have been used for a magical purpose. If these people had died together, at the same time and place (in a temple), having had conducted appropriate rituals and in the presence of the one who had initiated this ceremony, it would have been a different thing. No matter if it was about the use of the energy of sacrifices for a Great Work (?), or for the healing of someone’s ill body (Czyński’s?), or ‘soul stealing,’ as done by *bokors* or *kahunas*, an operator is always substantial at the place. Another supposition may be taken that these suicides were imposed by the Order and had no specific magical meaning. They could have been promised something they blindly believed in (“a return to the absolute – to nirvana”)! Similarly, as in the case of suicidal sects, such as that of Koresh or the Order of the Solar Temple, who were promised a spaceship with Enoch or Elias aboard, awaiting them! And one more option: a suicide resulting from organisation’s statutes, as in the case of the Freemasonic Order of the Golden Centurium. If in a suicide lottery a member drew a ballot binding him to offer his life as a sacrifice, yet refused to do so, the Order had him killed with an unearthly telepathic-telephonic apparatus called *Teophone*.”<sup>27</sup>

A lot has been written on Czesław Czyński, yet only a marginal part is facts. I have learned how the press creates its “own reality” concerning Czyński, even nowadays. Searching through websites I found a text titled “*Wampirzy budzą się z letargu*” (Vampires Awake from Lethargy). To my amazement it turned out that the vampire was no one else than Czesław Czyński. “First mentions about vampirism emerge as early as in the Bible. Legends about *strigoi* and bloodthirsty demons existed also in civilisations of the ancient world. The fear of vampires reached its peak in the 17th century. In Hungary, Silesia, Moravia, Czech lands, Poland, and Greece it became epidemic. Professor Anna Mikołajko, a cultural anthropologist at Warsaw University, investigates the phenomenon of pre-war vampirism in Po-

land. According to her, Czesław Czyński, a writer, an occultist, and a hypnotist, was among those considered vampires at that time” (*Wampirzy budzą ...* 2010). I have immediately contacted Prof. Mikołajko to learn the source of information regarding Czyński’s vampirism, since I have never heard of such view on this luminary. A. Mikołajko herself was surprised about the information presented in the text cited above, admitting that during the interview with the author she had merely indicated that Czyński was associated with the incidents of suicides at that time. Nevertheless, the author decided to make Czyński a vampire.

It is beyond question, that this article does not exhaust the subject of prewar ritual suicides, yet, at least, it “desatanises” the Polish esotericist Czesław Czyński, also known as Punar Bhava. Most probably, in the course of a future research some blank spots of his biography will be filled in and some blemishes will be rectified.

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26 Bogusław Bałos is a pioneer of contemporary occultism. He has founded the Polish branch of the magical order “*Argentum Astrum*.” It was he to whom the well-known poet Andrzej Bursa dedicated his poem on Cagliostro.

27 A letter from Bogusław Bałos to Zbigniew Łagosz from May 29, 2010 – in the author’s collection.

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