

## FILM

The new documentary by Rafael Lewandowski tackles the rich and fascinating story of Zygmunt LubiczZaleski - a philosopher, writer, and poet who spent most of his life in France. Like many other independent activists, he was forced to emigrate because of the political climate. He was active, but out of the limelight. In spite of this, he had a tremendous impact on the creation of a strong, independent Poland through his cultural activities.

## OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT

Directed by Rafael Lewandowski

The film tells the story of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski (1882-1967) - a poet, writer, translator, music, art and literary critic, doctor of philosophy, and author. Forced to emigrate due to political reasons, in 1914 he committed himself fully to teaching Polish in France. His lectures turned out to be the cornerstone of Polish language studies in France. After the outbreak of the war, he became a member of the Polish resistance movement in France, a chairman of the Polish Red Cross, which helped refugees, and the president of the Welfare Society for the Poles in France. Arrested on 19 March 1943 by the Italian fascists and handed over to the Nazis, after a period of brutal interrogation he was sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp.

When the war was over, he decided to stay in France with his family and organise assistance for Polish university students abroad. He was a very active publisher, lecturer, a general secretary of the Polish Society for History and Literature in Paris. He engaged in social, political, and scientific activity, promoting Polish culture and building good French-Polish relations. Zaleski helped Polish emigrants and scientists, and he was an ardent supporter of Polish affairs in France.

Title: Z DALA OD ORKIESTRY

English title: OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT

Director: RAFAEL LEWANDOWSKI | Cinematographer: PIOTR NIEMYJSKI

Writer: RAFAEL LEWANDOWSKI | Editor: MIŁOSZ HERMANOWICZ | Sound: TOMASZ WIECZOREK

Producers: HÉLÈNE ZALESKI, RAFAEL LEWANDOWSKI | Production company: ZYGMUNT ZALESKI STICHTING, VERTIGO

Duration: 86 min | Country: POLSKA | Year: 2017

Distribution: FUNDACJA TUMULT

## ZYGMUNT ZALESKI

### ZYGMUNT LUBICZ-ZALESKI

Zygmunt Wacław Michał Zaleski, *de armis* Lubicz, was born on the 29 September 1882 in KlonowiecKoracz in the Mazovian Voivodeship to a landed gentry family. He was a literary historian, critic, poet, publicist and writer, diplomat, professor of the University of Warsaw, and holder of honorary doctorates from the universities in Montpellier and Lille. He was active in Poland and France. Married to Maria Zdziarska, he had four children: Andrzej, Kazimierz, Roman, and Monika.

He showed great interest in literature and a passion for music - he played the piano. Persuaded by his father, he reluctantly enrolled as a student of the Polytechnic Institute in Warsaw. However, he soon decided to transfer to the Warsaw School of Fine Arts. During his university years, he was a member of 'Zet' (Association of the Polish Youth), the Grammar School Commission, and the Association for the Renationalisation of Schools. He believed that the struggle for Polish schooling and language was the key to the preservation of national identity.

As an active member of the underground movement for independence, he was arrested by the tsarist authorities and imprisoned in the 10th Pavilion of the Citadel in Warsaw.

After he was released in 1905, together with his friend, Jan Purwin, he went abroad to study first in Berlin and then in Munich and Paris, where he enrolled to study philosophy. Three years later, he returned to Poland to teach Polish literature in schools in Warsaw. Since his activity risked his imprisonment by the tsarist administration, in 1910 Zaleski left the country again and went to Munich. After a short stay in the capital of Bavaria, in December of the same year he travelled to Paris to enrol at the *École des Hautes Études Sociales*. His graduation thesis was entitled *La lutte pour l'école polonaise (The Fight for Polish Schools)*.

In 1914-1916, he was a lecturer of Polish at the *École des Hautes Études Sociales* in Paris, and in 1916-1922 he taught Polish at the *École des Langues Orientales et Vivantes* and at the *L'Institut d'Études Slaves* at the Sorbonne. In 1918-1919, he wrote articles for the periodical *Armia Polska we Francji (The Polish Army in France)*.

His most important work published before the First World War was *Dzieło i twórca (The Work and the Creator)* - a collection of literary sketches, reviews, and theoretical essays. In 1916, he was elected the president of the Society of Polish Artists in Paris. Before Poland regained independence, Zygmunt Zaleski was actively engaged in the political activities in Paris that supported the Polish cause. He spent time with Ignacy Paderewski and Roman Dmowski, in 1917 he joined the Polish National Committee, he managed the Press Bureau of the Polish Delegation to the Peace Conference at Versailles, he worked for the Commission for Welfare of the Polish Office for Civil Affairs in France, and he contributed to organisation of the Polish Army in France. He co-organised secondary school graduation exams for the Polish soldiers. At the same time, he believed that to win a strong position in Europe for Poland, it was necessary to convince the French of the significance of his country by teaching the Polish language and culture in France. Most of his active life in France was dedicated to the achievement of this goal.

In 1924, he was appointed the official delegate of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education.

The challenges of the vast range of his activities in Paris led to Zaleski's perception as a 'one-man institution' in France. He managed to launch a network of 10 university language courses, effectively promoting Polish language and culture. At the same time, he wrote numerous books and articles on the history of literature and elaborated on political affairs that were of significance for the future of Poland.

In the interwar period, he was a member of the Local Committee of the Polish Library in Paris, cooperating in this role with Marie Skłodowska-Curie, who was vice-president of the committee. He was also one of directors of the Centre for Polish Civilisation at the Polish Library in Paris, the editor-in-chief of the Warsaw periodical *Życie Sztuk (Life of Arts)*, and a professor of literature at Warsaw University.

He sent numerous articles from Paris to Poland - these were published by *Przegląd Narodowy (National Review)*, *Gazeta Warszawska (Warsaw Gazette)*, and *Głos Warszawski (Voice of Warsaw)*. In 1921-1939, his texts were also published on a regular basis by *Kurier Warszawski (Warsaw Courier)*, as well as the French *Mercure de France*.

France recognised the achievements of Professor Zaleski in the field of cultural and scientific cooperation with Poland: he was made a Knight of the Legion of Honour (Légion d'Honneur), and several years later, an Officer of the Legion of Honour. The latter ceremony was attended by Mr Raymond Poincaré, the former President of France.

When the Second World War started, Zaleski was in Warsaw. In the winter of 1940, summoned by the Polish government in France, together with his eldest son, Andrzej, he headed on foot to Slovakia, then Hungary, and finally to France.

After the French surrendered in June 1940, Zaleski was elected the chairman of the Polish Red Cross in France, which, under the pressure from the French authorities, was renamed Groupement d'Aide aux Polonais (GAP) - the Welfare Society for Poles in France. Among those who managed the organisation were three former Polish ministers, and the society cooperated strictly with the Polish resistance movement in France. His activity of the time is perhaps illustrated best by the words of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski himself in 1961, which were published in May 1968 in *Orzeł Biały (White Eagle)*: 'I remember quite well a discussion we had at the time among supporters of unconditional separation of the two types of activity: the official at the Polish Red Cross, and clandestine in the secret organisations. Personally, I supported the separation of these roles; at the same time, however, I opted for strong internal cooperation, assuming the priority of an unceasing struggle against the enemy over the social tasks of the Polish Red Cross. A very definite - although, perhaps, somewhat unfortunate - illustration of this subordination of social actions of the Red Cross to conspiracy tasks was the fact that the then-president of the Red Cross was appointed as a liaison who was responsible for transferring money and correspondence from our post in Lisbon (Colonel Jan Kowalewski) to posts in Grenoble. This accumulation of activity lasted until the day of my arrest: 19 March 1943.'

He also organised the Cyprian Norwid Secondary School in Villard-de-Lans - the only Polish high school operating legally in occupied Europe - and became its principal. As a result of his activity in the resistance movement, on 19 March 1943 he was arrested. After painful interrogation conducted by the gestapo in Paris, he was sent to the concentration camp in Buchenwald where he was imprisoned until liberation in April 1945.

In May 1945, Zaleski returned to his empty apartment at rue Boissière in Paris. Physically exhausted by two years of harsh camp conditions, he nevertheless kept developing his social and patriotic activity thanks to his moral strength:

- He took care of the Polish youth who were forced to emigrate due to political reasons.

He enjoyed great trust from the French authorities - his signature confirming a positive result for a secondary school exam was sufficient to warrant university enrolment.

- He supported Polish secondary schools for political emigrants in La Courtine and later in Les Ageux.

He was a co-founder of the Polish Association of Former Deportees and Political Prisoners in France. Until his death, he remained a president of the Association, which eventually joined the Free International Federation of Deportees and Resistance Internees (FILDIR), of which Professor Zaleski became a vice-president. Thanks to his efforts, Polish deportees and political emigrants received German compensation payments. However, political emigrants faced financial difficulties and were ignored by both the Polish and French governments that administered the German compensation payments.

Although he struggled with enormous financial problems himself, Zaleski refused to engage in any relations with the communist government in Poland imposed by the Soviets. Together with Franciszek Pułaski, in 1946 he reactivated the Society of History and Literature, a 100-year-old organisation that managed the Polish Library in France, which thus became a centre of culture and thought free of communist influence. Zaleski remained the general secretary of the Society of History and Literature in Paris until his death.

Because of his Buchenwald experiences, Zaleski committed himself ardently to the project of a united Europe, noticing the need for reconciliation and peace, and in his publications and speeches before French audiences, he rejected the idea of revenge and humiliation of the defeated enemy. Apart from his political and social activity, he fought to promote the Polish language and culture, conducted his own research, and kept writing; he also became an associate member of Academie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

He was a real Renaissance man - a man of many skills and talents, an open man, a man of action. He published hundreds of articles, studies, and essays on Polish, French and European culture, translated tens of books by French authors, and gave numerous lectures and talks. His literary works include a rich collection of lyrical poems.

France honoured Zaleski for his heroic bravery in the resistance movement, for his strength during the brutal interrogations by the gestapo, and for his long stay at the Buchenwald concentration camp by presenting him some of the country's highest decorations:

The Commander's Cross of the Legion of Honour, handed to him by President René Coty on 5 December 1957

The Grand Cross and accompanying star (Grand Officier), handed to Zaleski by President Charles de Gaulle on 31 July 1959

Zaleski partially documented his life - his sacrifice, creative, organisational and scientific work, teaching, and war experiences - in his *Dziennik nieciągły* (*Non-Continuous Diary*)

(1904-1925) and *Pamiętnik od Grotowic do Buchenwaldu (Diary from Grotowice to Buchenwald)* (1939-1945), published in 1998.

He died on 15 December 1967 in Paris.

## AUTHORS

RAFAEL LEWANDOWSKI - Director and writer, producer

A director and writer born to a Polish-French family. A graduate of the Faculty of Film Directing of the famous French film school La Fémis. He is the author of more than 10 documentaries (including *Cela (The Cell)*, *Piosenka i życie (Song and Life)*, *Cień na duszy (Shadow on the Soul)*, and *Minkowski | Saga*). His feature debut, *Kret (The Mole)* (starring B. Szybczyński, M. Dziędziel, and W. Pszoniak), gained much appreciation and won awards at national and international film festivals. In 2012, he was awarded the *Polityka* weekly's Passport, and in 2015 the French Ministry of Culture decorated him with the Honour of Chevalier of French Art and Literature. He lives in Warsaw, constantly working on feature and documentary projects.

Selected filmography:

*Minkowski | Saga* (2013 - documentary)

*Kret (The Mole)*; 2011 - feature film)

*Bye, Bye Dublin!* (2010 - documentary)

*Sztuka milczenia (The Art of Keeping Silent)*; 2008 - documentary)

*Kamery w trybunale (Cameras at the Tribunal)*; 2004 - documentary)

*Piosenka i życie (Life and Song)*; 2006 - documentary)

*W Cieniu Don Giovanniego (In the Shadow of Don Giovanni)*; 2003 - documentary)

*Po drugiej stronie płótna (On the Other Side of the Canvas)*; 2004 - documentary)

*Przesłuchania (Investigations)*; 2000 - documentary)

*Cień na duszy (Shadow on the Soul)*; 1999 - documentary)

*Portret Sonii Rykiel (The Portrait of Sonia Rykiel)*; 1999 - documentary)

*Cela (The Cell)*; 1996 - documentary)

HÉLÈNE ZALESKI - Producer

A graduate of ISUP (Institut de statistique de l'université de Paris (Paris Institute of Statistics)), actuary, former chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors of Alior Bank, and currently chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors of Onwelo S.A, a company that provides IT services. Founder of Infracht sp. z o.o., a platform for transport auctions, and co-owner of Więcej Miejsca sp. z o.o., which provides property storage and moving services.

A sponsor of Polish archaeological missions at Marea and Saqqara.

Treasurer of the Zygmunt Zaleski Foundation since its establishment in 1990.

#### PIOTR NIEMYJSKI - Cinematographer

A Polish cinematographer and graduate of the Faculty of Cinematography of Łódź Film School. Laureate of numerous prizes, including awards for *Lęk Wysokości (Fear of Heights)* at the European Film Festival, the Multimedia Happy End Optimistic Film Festival, and the Prowincjonalia Polish National Festival of Film Art. He also worked as a cinematographer on *Minkowski | Saga* directed by Rafael Lewandowski.

#### MIŁOSZ HERMANOWICZ - Editor

A Polish director and writer. Editor of such films as *Minkowski | Saga*, *Labirynt (The Labyrinth)*, *Andrzej Wajda: Róbmy zdjęcie! (Andrzej Wajda: Let's Take a Picture!)*, and *Niewinna (The Innocent)*.

#### TOMASZ WIECZOREK - Sound

Polish sound engineer and producer, graduate of sound engineering at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, and member of the Polish Filmmakers Association. He has worked on TV series (*Kryminalni - Crime Detectives*), feature films, and documentaries, including *Elderly*, *Kret (The Mole)*, *Wołyń (Volhynia)*, and *Efekt domina (Domino Effect)*.

## OPINIONS

The film *Out of the Limelight* is like an essay. A good essay is not about asking questions and giving answer, but about inspiring the readers to make their own inquiries.

In the story of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, my attention was drawn to the humanist-patriot relationship that is referred to in the film. I have to admit that I find it much easier to identify with the film hero's wife, Maria Zdziarska - a doctor, soldier of the war of 1920, author of a memoir. It is worth noting that the story of this fantastic woman, a prisoner of Pawiak and Ravensbruck, who had the courage to treat a suffering co-prisoner with pneumothorax, shows how emancipated Polish women were in the interwar period, at the same time proving their very modern approach to marriage. In my eyes, Maria Zaleska is the silent heroine of the film.

The second aspect of the film that I found worth reflection (and most certainly appreciation) is how Zygmunt Zaleski - referred to as 'the ambassador of the Polish cause' - perceived the role and importance of education. Zygmunt Zaleski was the founder of the only Polish secondary school functioning without restraints in Europe during the Second World War (it was the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Secondary School in Villard-de-Lans). He was also able to organise educational activity under the most extreme circumstances - in the Buchenwald concentration camp. I am amazed (particularly from today's perspective) by his views on teaching and learning, which he believed to be civic duties. Zaleski taught his children the same approach: during the occupation, his son was an active member of the underground movement, but also attended clandestine lessons, considering them to be a form of resistance against the enemy.

Thirdly, the film seems to have gained particular importance today in the context of the debate on whether we should receive refugees or not (yes, of course), as it reminds us that the Poles, too, were refugees once - and Zygmunt Zaleski's secondary school was, in fact, established for them.

One more comment: Zaleski decided to work with the Polish minority in France, because he wanted to keep his distance from the internal conflicts of independent Poland. Being a genuine intellectual, aware of the fact that 'service, mission, and sacrifice' was his duty, he turned to those who needed him instead of engaging in pointless debates. He simply knew he would be more useful abroad. As an intellectual, he also attached great importance to 'usefulness'. On the one hand, such faith in the ethos and willingness to act are encouraging; on the other, it is very sad that Poland was divided at a time when it should have united in joy. I do not know whether this was the authors' intention - nevertheless, they have reminded us once again that history not so much repeats itself as creates quite ironic parallels.

Katarzyna Taras, PhD

/film expert, film critic/

The film by Rafael Lewandowski is a multifaceted story of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski - a deserved humanist and social activist who was fully committed to the Polish cause, to which he sacrificed his entire adult life. He lived in the turbulent times when Poland

regained independence and struggled hard to defend it. Zaleski supported his homeland from a distance, working tirelessly as the ambassador and animator of Polish culture in Western Europe. Initially forced to leave the country, he later made a conscious decision to remain an emigrant, and he spent most of his life in France, continuing his efforts to promote Polish culture and science. His emotional and physical links with his homeland never ceased to exist: he often visited Poland and always carried it with him in his heart.

*Out of the Limelight* restores the memory of this unjustly forgotten researcher of literature of the Romantic period, translator, teacher, musician, poet, and the good spirit of the Polish cause in the West. Lewandowski's documentary not only shows Zaleski from an interesting perspective, but also reveals to us the fate of his noble family, which was deeply interwoven with the history of Poland. It is a moving story of various faces of patriotism, of strength of family traditions, of Poles as Europeans. *Out of the Limelight* is an important voice in the debate on our identity. Everyone who feels concerned about Poland in the context of Europe should watch the film.

Marcin Lutomiński, PhD

/literature expert, historian of Polish literature and culture, researcher of works by emigrants/

Polish films rarely show us our countrymen working on behalf of our country abroad. This makes Rafał Lewandowski's documentary, which brings us closer to the extraordinary story and achievements of the outstanding emigrant activist Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, all the more important. The biography of the film's hero is a lesson in patriotism shaped by the best models of the romantic tradition. It is also proof of our need to remain faithful to humanitarian ideals in the face of the dramatic events that unfolded in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The content of the film, the comments of experts on the history of literature, and the recollections of friends and relatives of Lubicz-Zaleski prove the lasting impact and relevance of his achievements as a promoter of Polish culture, art, and science. The documentary underlines the significance of the aesthetic concepts of Lubicz-Zaleski through the use of audiovisual means of expression. The audience is able to grasp Zaleski's synesthetic sensitivity thanks to the creative use of image and sound, as well as the moving narration by Wojciech Pszoniak.

Radostaw Osiński, PhD

/film critic, film expert, curator at the Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń/



## INFORMATION FOR CINEMAS:

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to present a documentary feature for your consideration as part of your repertoire: *Out of the Limelight* by director and writer Rafael Lewandowski, the creator of the iconic film *The Mole*, laureate of such awards as the 36th Festival of Polish Feature Films in Gdynia and the 35th International Film Festival in Montreal, holder of the *Polityka* weekly's Passport for 2011, and recipient of the Order of Art and Literature from the French Ministry of Culture. The Polish premiere of the film, to be attended by its authors, has been planned for 26 September 2017 at the Atlantic cinema in Warsaw. It will be the first film to inaugurate the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence. Cinema broadcasts are to commence on Friday, 29 September 2017, and we hope you will be interested in the film.

*Out of the Limelight* is an 86-minute-long story of the life of Zygmunt Lubicz-Zaleski, a poet, writer, translator, music, art and literary critic, doctor of philosophy, and publicist who, forced to emigrate, started to teach the Polish language in France. Engaged in the activity of the Polish resistance movement in France, he supported refugees and was appointed president of the Welfare Society for the Poles. The film presents the story of this unduly forgotten Pole and the various faces of patriotism, focusing on the significance of family traditions.

The film is distributed in the DCP or Blu-Ray/DVD formats. Along with the copy, we provide posters in the B1 format and leaflets in the A6 format. The broadcast fee is 50% of the value of the tickets sold. If you would like to include this title in your repertoire, we can support your promotional activities in your city or region.

Provided below are materials in an electronic format that you may find useful for promotion of the broadcast, including a press-kit, posters, leaflets, and the film's trailer in HD and 720p format. If you are interested in broadcasting *Out of the Limelight* at your cinema, do not hesitate to contact us.

## TEMPLATE OF THE FILM BROADCASTING AGREEMENT

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