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**Zbigniew Czarnuch – educator, social activist, regionalist
and master of Poznań’s “Łejery” children’s collective theatre**

**Zbigniew Czarnuch – pedagog, działacz społeczny, regionalista i mistrz
poznańskich „Łejerów”**

Abstract

Aim. This study aims to present the profile of Zbigniew Czarnuch from the perspective of his life choices and in the context of the Poznań “Łejery” children’s collective theatre. This topic was undertaken to commemorate Scoutmaster Czarnuch, born on March 18, 1930, in Lututów and died on September 22, 2024, in Witnica.

Methods and materials. The presentation and commemoration of the figure of the late Zbigniew Czarnuch is the result of the author’s analysis of existing and elicited sources: electronic sources, press publications, articles from periodicals, studies and interviews conducted by Katarzyna Sadowska with Jerzy Hamerski in the 2023/2024 school year at Primary School No. 83 in Poznań. The state of research on the figure of Zbigniew Czarnuch is still insufficient. Studies are usually of a popularizing nature and are the subject of stud-

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ies by editors of local magazines. It should also be emphasized that the problem of Zbigniew Czarnuch's connections with the Poznań "Łejery" group, which was founded by a student of the Scoutmaster - Jerzy Hamerski - in 1975 and resulted in the establishment of Primary School No. 83, named after Emilia Waśniowska, in Poznań, has not been addressed so far.

Results and conclusion. Zbigniew Czarnuch was an outstanding teacher working for understanding between nations, and between people, he was also a historian and a regionalist who will remain in the memory for many generations. The study touches only on selected issues related to the person and work of the Scoutmaster, but the author hopes that her efforts will result in further research and dissemination of knowledge about the extraordinary life and achievements of Zbigniew.

Keywords: Zbigniew Czarnuch, Makusyny, life and work, Poznań "Łejery", social activist.

Abstrakt

Cel. Celem niniejszego opracowania jest ukazanie sylwetki Zbigniewa Czarnucha z perspektywy jego życiowych wyborów, twórczości oraz w kontekście poznańskich „Łejców”. Temat ten podjęto, aby upamiętnić harcmistrza Z. Czarnucha, który urodził się 18 marca 1930 roku w Lututowie, zmarł natomiast 22 września 2024 roku w Witnicy.

Metody i materiały. Ukazanie i upamiętnienie sylwetki Z. Czarnucha jest wynikiem analizy źródeł zastanych i wywołanych: źródeł elektronicznych, publikacji prasowych, artykułów z wydawnictw ciągłych, opracowań oraz wywiadów przeprowadzanych przez Katarzynę Sadowską z Jerzym Hamerskim w roku szkolnym 2023/2024 na terenie Szkoły Podstawowej nr 83 w Poznaniu. Stan badań nad sylwetką Z. Czarnucha jest dotąd niewystarczający. Opracowania mają z reguły charakter popularyzatorski i są przedmiotem studiów redaktorów lokalnych czasopism. Podkreślić należy ponadto, że nie poruszano dotąd problemu powiązań Z. Czarnucha z poznańskim zespołem „Łejery”, który został założony przez wychowanka harcmistrza – Jerzego Hamerskiego – w 1975 roku i zaowocował powstaniem Szkoły Podstawowej nr 83 im. Emilii Waśniowskiej w Poznaniu.

Wyniki i wnioski. Należy stwierdzić, że Z. Czarnuch był wybitnym pedagogiem działającym na rzecz porozumienia między ludźmi i między narodami, był także historykiem i regionalistą, który pozostanie w pamięci wielu pokoleń. W opracowaniu poruszono załewie wybrane kwestie związane z sylwetką i dziełem harcmistrza, autorka jednak wyraża nadzieję, że jej starania zaowocują dalszymi badaniami i upowszechnieniem wiedzy o niezwykłym życiu i dorobku Druha Zbigniewa.

Słowa kluczowe: Zbigniew Czarnuch, Makusyny, życie i dzieło, poznańskie „Łejery”, działacz społeczny.

Introduction*

“A certain era has come to an end, Zbigniew Czarnuch has passed away,” wrote Renata Ochwat on September 22, 2024 in the pages of the Gorzow Press (Ochwat, 2024). The scoutmaster was described as a scoutmaster, an educator, a history teacher, “a promoter of reconciliation through understanding” (Ochwat, 2024). Undoubtedly, “[...] his life’s work is a huge book. He left a huge legacy – his texts, his books, his critical articles [...]. It is actually a huge and extremely valuable, actually priceless library” (Ochwat, 2024).

Furthermore, R. Ochwat pointed out:

A great regionalist, a champion, a teacher, has gone to the Blue Meadows after more than 94 years. He went into that night where, sadly, an Areopagus of regionalists, historians, enlightened and wise people who opened the minds and hearts of others had already gathered. The last time of his life was not one of the best. The last of His life was a terrible time of passing away in pain and illness (Ochwat, 2024).

Words that are beautiful, important and true. According to many people, Z. Czarnuch was, above all, a great educator who always saw the hidden potential in a person and brought it to the surface (Ochwat, 2014). This is what his pupils and colleagues said about their master: “He simply discovers talents and makes those talents pay off, and it doesn’t matter the age of the person that Czarnuch motivates to do something” (Ochwat, 2014).

While Z. Czarnuch is known in Poland primarily as an extraordinary historian working for Polish-German reconciliation, a regionalist who publishes texts on the Lubuskie region and its surroundings, and a lover of the Warta River (Czarnuch, 2012), in Poznań he is consistently mentioned as a champion by Jerzy Hamerski, a laureate of the Order of the Smile, the Irena Sendler Award and above all the founder of Poznań’s “Łejer,” who emphasised very often:

[...] I was very fortunate to meet at the beginning of my pedagogical journey a Scoutmaster whom I have been trying to match ever since. He has shared his wealth of experience, intellect, talent, criticism and friendship with me for over 50 years now. He is Zbigniew Czarnuch – an educator, historian, artist and writer. Creator of the legendary scouting strain Makusyny (sons of Makuszyński) from Zielona Góra**.

* It is a deliberate move to leave numerous quotations in their original form. The author does so because of the need to show the most faithful linguistic picture characterising the figure of Z. Czarnuch.

** Information obtained by the author from Jerzy Hamerski between September 1, 2023 and September 25, 2024.

Although Druh Z. Czarnuch started his pedagogical work back in Stalinist Poland, he is still firmly rooted in the “Łejer” tradition to this day. He is inspiring and perhaps even crucial to this tradition. Thus, he still remains with us thanks to his pedagogical views, his writing output, and his many courageous, innovative and extremely pertinent inspirations.

The purpose of this study is to present the profile and achievements of Z. Czarnuch from the perspective of his life choices and in the context of the Poznań “Łejer.” The portrayal and commemoration of his work is the result of an analysis of found and evoked sources: electronic sources, press publications, articles from continuous publications, studies and interviews conducted by Katarzyna Sadowska with J. Hamerski during the 2023/2024 school year at Primary School No. 83 in Poznań.

The state of research on the silhouette of Z. Czarnuch is so far insufficient. Studies are of a popularising nature and are generally the subject of studies by editors of local magazines. Moreover, it should be emphasised that the problem of Z. Czarnuch’s links with the Poznań “Łejery” troupe, which was founded by the Scoutmaster’s alumnus J. Hamerski in 1975 and resulted in the establishment of the Emilia Waśniowska Primary School No. 83 in Poznań, has not yet been addressed.

Druh Z. Czarnuch – Scoutmaster, social activist and educator

Druh Z. Czarnuch was born on March 18, 1930, in Lututów, and we say “goodbye” to him on 22 September 2024. “If teacher Zbigniew Czarnuch, a born pedagogue, had not appeared in Zielona Góra, he would have had to be invented” once wrote Alicja Zatrybówna (1966). According to Jadwiga Korcz-Dziadosz, “[...] it would be impossible to invent him, because no one would have enough imagination for that” (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020a).

Scoutmaster Z. Czarnuch was born in the Wieluń region. He moved to Witnica after the war, when his father Jan took up the post of mayor there in 1945–48. Zbigniew became one of the first students of the first gymnasium in Witnica’s history, but this school was closed before he graduated (Zysnarski, 2024). As Jerzy Zysnarski (2024) points out, however, this education was “enough to take up a position as an unqualified teacher in Witnica.” Subsequently, Z. Czarnuch matriculated at the secondary school for working people in Gorzów (Zysnarski, 2024), and in 1952 the future scout took up history studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He completed these studies in Warsaw. As R. Ochwat points out:

From 1957–68 he lived and worked in Zielona Góra. It was then that he introduced his experimental pedagogical method, which emphasised the students’ independence, at the 21st High School in Chopina Street. It was also at this time that he led the Makusyny. After a conflict with the teaching staff, he left Zielo-

na Góra and worked in Poznań, Warsaw, Lesko, Mokobody, and Niwiska, among others. After a setback in his personal life and other troubles just before martial law was imposed in 1981, he returned to Witnica and remained here permanently (Ochwat, 2014).

It should be emphasised that Z. Czarnuch worked all his life for the benefit of others, and he undertook work in Zielona Góra, Poznań, Warsaw and Lesko. He was an honorary citizen of Zielona Góra, Witnica and Frombork. His dream was above all to work as a teacher-educator, helping his pupils to discover their own resources, “[...] however, due to the party committee’s opinion of ‘too little ideological solidification,’ this was not given to him. Working with young people in a scout troop was supposed to replace teaching work” (Ochwat, 2014).

In addition, J. Korcz-Dziadosz mentions that Z. Czarnuch was employed as the manager of the Scout House in Zielona Góra in 1956 (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020a). These scouting roots, directed primarily at supporting young people with artistic and sightseeing passions, found their way to Poznań in the greatest measure and came to fruition in his “scouting dowry,” the Emilia Waśniowska Primary School No. 83 in Poznań, founded in 1990 and commonly referred to as “Łejery.”

Z. Czarnuch set up the first team on 24 February 1957. Initially, it was to be a boys’ cycling team, but it developed rapidly, and “[...] no encouraging posts on social media were needed for this – simply, the children of Zielona Góra wanted to learn through play and gain new experience” (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020b). Already

[...] after a year and a half, girls also started to be accepted into the team. The Makusyny soon became so numerous that a strain was created. Unfortunately, in 1968, due to the political system that prevailed in the 1960s, scout Zbigniew Czarnuch had to leave Zielona Góra for Poznań, and the strain ended up in the hands of someone else (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020b).

As we learn from the information on the troop website: “It proved impossible to replace the outstanding scout Zbigniew – in 1978 the strain was disbanded” (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020b).

The flagship song of the Makusyny, sung to words by Jerzy Litwiniuk, perfectly fitted in with the artistic and sightseeing activities of the scouts and the beautiful ideas professed by the scoutmaster:

Full of wise Polish land, which does not let us live in error.
Tell me where the wise are not and have not been, and will not be.
Where there is wind. Where the rain. Where the empty square only,

Where the devil says worship, there is no wise.
Hail to the suckers who are not discouraged by anything,
They did not listen to wise counsel.
Honour the persistent builders who change the world! (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020b).

During countless bicycle rallies, the Makusyny got to know the nearer and farther surroundings of the Lubuskie region, they learned through authentic experience of history, and this creative sightseeing resulted in the young discovering their small and large homeland and themselves (Korcz-Dzadosz, 2020b). From the beginning, Z. Czarnuch was guided by clearly defined norms: “to everyone respect and demands” and “by playing, we ourselves entertain others”, and therefore he knew very well that “[...] setting tasks and working out goals together and then acting to achieve this commonly accepted goal, is a simple way to create an extraordinary positive bond in the group” (2020b). J. Korcz-Dziadosz also writes about the Makusyny:

In the early years, the strain’s activities focused on playing in a backyard circus, which brought joy to Zielona Góra’s backyards in a real tent made from demobilised military equipment. This was what the younger scouts were in charge of, forming the joyful Cudaki group. With equal enthusiasm, the older scouts prepared twice an exhibition, solemnly called the Museum of Curiosities, displaying exhibits found in attics and lampposts in the rooms of the Cultural Centre. During the holidays, we set off on hikes: on bicycles from Jelenia Góra to Zielona Góra, along the coast; we also took part in the Warta Cycling Rally. After the holidays, we organised events for the city’s children, such as the “expedition of a thousand bicycles,” the “puppet parade,” the “exhibition of non-breed dogs.” The macaws were beginning to shake up the town, but this was only a prelude. The apogee came with the organisation of backyard scout groups, bringing together children from different areas of the city. Nine such teams were formed, each under the leadership of a deputy, and each team managed its own dovecote or attic above the cells, creating its own base and proposing the organisation of, for example, a Teutonic tournament. The tournament was preceded by the projection of slides about knighthood, the reading of “Teutonic Knights,” the tinkering with armour and swords, and was followed by the Battle of Grunwald, a communal party by the Wagmostaw River (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020a).

A life marked by the stigma of communist history

The 1950s and 1960s were not a light and peaceful time. The black clouds of the Polish

Communist Party were gathering over Poland, and in 1968 they directly affected Z. Czarnuch:

At the school in Zielona Góra, where he was headmaster and history teacher, he was accused of having views that were “too politically frivolous.” There was quite a large group of scouts coming from Jewish families, some of whom we bid farewell to, as it seemed at the time, forever, singing on the station platform “Farewell beautiful ladies/ into the blue distance we are sailing/ Perhaps the fate of jewels will give us a trunk/ or perhaps it will laugh at our noses” (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020a).

It is worth recalling that the black clouds mentioned here, hung over Poland twice: in the summer of 1967 and in the spring of 1968 (Stola, 2018). At that time, at the end of Władysław Gomułka’s rule, the public mood had decisively deteriorated (Suleja, 2006). According to Dariusz Stola, for the first time, the ongoing Cold War and Poland’s dependence on Moscow caused “[...] the authorities of communist Poland to consider themselves a party to a distant conflict in the Middle East: they condemned Israel, broke diplomatic relations with it and gave aid to Arab countries” (Stola, 2018, p. 7). The people of Poland were obliged to follow the ideas of the authorities, and these, in order to fuel anti-Jewish sentiment among Poles, launched an “anti-Israeli propaganda campaign” and mobilised “the masses to express the opinions and feelings indicated” (Stola, 2018, p. 8). During this time, the political police were sensitised to so-called dissenting attitudes and “[...] informed the leadership that Polish Jews sympathised with Israel. They were stigmatised for this offence by the First Secretary of the party – the de facto head of state; soon the first punishments began to fall on them” (Stola, 2018, p. 8). The second, more tragic, installment of anti-Jewish propaganda took place in the spring of 1968 (the so-called March events). At that time, “[...] in response to student protests and ferment among intellectuals, the authorities launched a great campaign of hatred against alleged internal enemies, among whom Zionists were prominent” (Stola, 2018, p. 8). Against the so-called enemies, the authorities mobilised the entire masses, “[...] séances of hatred were organised, an open purge was launched, which included above all Jews” (Stola, 2018, p. 8).

As J. Korcz-Dziadosz points out, despite the unfavourable mood of the Jewish minority in Poland at the time,

In Makusyny, the so-called Jewish problem simply did not exist and what we experienced in 1968 came as a shock. Makusyny students took an active part in the March events in Warsaw and Wrocław. All this made Zbyszek Czarnuch an undesirable person in Zielona Góra. He left for Poznań, putting the strain in other hands. It is said that there are no irreplaceable people, but attempts to replace

Zbyszek simply turned out to be a rush into the sun (Korcz-Dziadosz, 2020a).

The end of the Makusyny, Scout J. Hamerski, who witnessed the events of spring 1968, recalls as follows:

And it was 1968, the sad year of the anti-Semitic crackdown. Zbigniew Czarnuch, despite his great merits, was thrown out of Zielona Góra with a bang because he courageously took the side of the Jews. He was taken in by Professor Heliodor Muszyński of the University of Poznań. A few months later, I too joined their team*.

After the events of 1968, Z. Czarnuch thus became a protégé of Professor H. Muszyński in the Department of Educational Theory at UAM. At that time, Professor H. Muszyński was concerned with the implementation of the new educational system throughout Poland. In 1970 Z. Czarnuch

[...] he moved to the Headquarters of the ZHP in Warsaw, where he founded the Documentation and Information Department of the Headquarters, worked in the staff of “Operation 1001 Frombork” and in the Team of Scout Theorists, also conducted exercises in scouting methodology at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of Warsaw and edited a programme in the Girls and Boys Television entitled “The Family Secretary” (Zysnarski, 2024).

According to J. Zysnarski, Z. Czarnuch, after his marriage to Anna Kozakiewicz, born in Krotoszyn (an alumna of the Makusyny), became director of the Communal School in Lesko in 1972 (Zysnarski, 2024). However, he was dismissed from his post with immediate effect in 1976 for “[...] failing to prepare summer accommodation for the family of an officer of the Chief School Inspectorate of the MOiW” (Zysnarski, 2024). What seems significant, in defence of scout Z. Czarnuch “[...] the leading weeklies in the country and authorities such as Prof. H. Muszyński and Aleksander Kamiński became involved” (Zysnarski, 2024). After these events, scoutmaster Z. Czarnuch worked for a year in Czarna in the Bieszczady Mountains, and “[...] in 1977 he moved with his family to the village of Niwiski near Siedlce and became director of the Communal Collective School in nearby Mokobody” (Zysnarski, 2024).

When he moved back to Witnica in 1981 (after his divorce), he taught history at the local secondary school and was also passionate about researching and disseminating the history of the town and region. In 1985 he retired and took up a 1/3-time job as an archivist at the State Archive in Gorzów (Zysnarski, 2024).

* Interview conducted with J. Hamerski by K. Sadowska in March 2024.

Among his texts, we also find those devoted to the national minority stigmatised in the 1960s. These were, for example: *The Jews in Witnica* (2008), *A note from two research expeditions on the Noteć River in the area of the Wielkopolska-Novomarchy borderland* (2009), *A tale of two lands of the inhabitants of Pyrzany* (2020) and others, in which the author points to the necessity of interpersonal understanding. In general, everything that scout Z. Czarnuch did was subordinated to the

[...] striving to understand the cultural phenomenon of the other/foreigner, to reason from the perspective of the other side of the argument, to seek a field of dialogue and rapprochement, to connect people and ideas by taming their historical narrative, to seek what unites rather than divides, and if it divides painfully and very emotionally, to aim for empathy, to enable symbolic expiation for the necessary purification (catharsis) (Idzikowski, 2012, pp. 22–23).

In addition, Z. Czarnuch was the initiator of the Polish-German association EDUCATIO Pro Europa Viadrina, one of the originators of the Signposts and Mileposts of Civilisation Park in Witnica, as well as the town museum. He has been awarded many times for his commitment to projects related to the former New March and for his services to the understanding between Poles and Germans. In 2009, he received the Georg Dehio-Kulturpreis funded by the German Cultural Forum for Eastern Europe. He has also been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, the Gold and Silver Crosses of Merit, the Medal of the National Education Commission, the Badge of Honour "Merit for Polish Culture" (2010) and many other state and local government awards, including the Order of the Smile (Barański, 2020).

Zbigniew Czarnuch – scoutmaster of Łejery

About Zbigniew Czarnuch, Bogdan Idzikowski wrote:

He is a man of many social personalities, inscribed in many social roles, a "fighter" for local issues but framed in a supra-local context. He is a character inscribed in the pattern of a social activist who is at the same time a reflective intellectual. His actions – from micro-events to continuous initiatives of panoramic scope – are embedded in historiosophical and socio-pedagogical concepts, for which action is an instrument for the realisation of an idea, an idea, a broader humanistic value. It is the people – the individual and the larger social groups, who are the central category of reference for his actions (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 22).

The pedagogical mission of Z. Czarnuch was to raise an engaged human being, capable of transforming the world. In his most prominent pedagogical work, the “Makusyny,” he raised people such as:

- Urszula Dudziak – world-renowned jazzwoman,
- Ryszard Peryt – Polish opera stager, promoter of opera music,
- Dr Andrzej Toczewski – Director of the Lubuskie Museum in Zielona Góra,
- Jerzy Czerniawski – painter,
- Czesław Markiewicz – writer and journalist,
- Dr Iwona Peryt-Gierasimczuk,
- Dr Wojciech Śmigielski,
- Prof Wiesław Gładkiewicz and many others (Ochwat, 2014).

He brought them up with a concern for the development of personality, sensitivity, self-determination and responsibility.

In 1969 Z. Czarnuch wrote: “[...] we can say to ourselves that the period of struggle to secure the minimum of biological needs for every human being is over [...] from this fact arises the necessity of reckoning with human needs of a higher order” (Czarnuch, 1969, p. 24).

The Scout, in the turbulent times of the communist era, was concerned that young people were being exploited from the point of view of “the interests of the organization,” so he postulated a concern for the individual resources of each pupil, for supporting the development of their personality and responding to their passions (Czarnuch, 1969). He proposed that pedagogical work in scouting should focus on supporting young people in self-education in the broadest sense, on finding answers to the question “what am I like and what is the result of that?” (Czarnuch, 1969, p. 25). In order to help young people take “excursions into themselves” (Czarnuch, 1969, p. 23), he proposed involving them in joint initiatives (in the case of the “Makusyny” in the rebuilding of the castle), in reading, sports, excursions, walks, learning languages, feasting together in the evenings (Czarnuch, 1969).

This mission was taken over by his pupils, including Druh J. Hamerski, who, pushed by great curiosity, joined Scoutmaster Z. Czarnuch. The scout recalls that the latter received him with kindness and joined the troop as a journeyman. He admitted:

What I saw there was a masterpiece of education through work and art. Everything blended together in nature and parts of an old castle. It was there, under the guidance of the master, that my idea of an educational and artistic formula for children’s theatre took shape. I had no idea at the time how quickly and turbulently our fate would unfold*.

* Interview conducted with J. Hamerski by K. Sadowska in March 2024.

The alumni of scout Z. Czarnuch argue to this day that:

[...] one of the great moments in the life of the Makusyny was, among other things, the adaptation of the old castle of the Rechenbergs and von Schönaichs for the Siedlisko strain. We worked on its adaptation and for us it was a real treasure hunt, because we actually found one silver tray or one cup. It was something amazing (Ochwat, 2014).

In his pedagogical work, J. Hamerski explicitly refers to the Makusyny:

I think the secret of the ensemble's such a long existence lies in the educational idea established at the beginning and the methods and forms of work adapted to it, and above all in the fantastic teachers and artists I managed to gather around me. I was also very lucky to have masters Heliodor Muszyński and Scoutmaster Zbigniew Czarnuch, the creator of the "Makusyny" in Zielona Góra, under whom I worked as an apprentice*.

In Wiesław Hudon's book (1968), we read about the "Cudaki" – a scout circus, an artistic troupe operating in Makusyny. The author recounts authentic events, including a story about a circus under a holey tent, where the Makusyny's charges pursued their artistic passions, and among them there was even a knife swallower (Hudon, 1968). He spins a tale of a gentleman on a pigeonhole, from which we learn how scout Z. Czarnuch decreed that every Makusyn was to be a backyard ringleader. He also describes King Jagiełło's trainers, which were the war booty of Ulrich von Jungingen. In the chapter *Breakfast with the Buffaloes* we read:

Hey wonders, hey wonders, once again the opportunity is there for a dram!
Today, we will certainly succeed in building all sorts of wonders.
Hey, hey, laugh, laugh, any doctor will tell you that!
Hey, hey, laugh laugh laugh, laughter is health, bam! (Hudon, 1968, p. 73).

J. Hamerski's experience gained at the side of Z. Czarnuch enabled him to develop new pedagogical ideas, which he included in the concept of "Otwarty" (cf. Hamerski, 1981, 1982). New ideas, prompts, thoughts – it was to open hearts and minds, to support the development of tolerance, empathy, sensitivity, thus J. Hamerski recalls:

Our circle was always broken, because it was a symbolic place for the new man [...].
Yes, I was the one who opened people up to people. Not by accident, not by improvi-

* From interviews conducted with J. Hamerski by K. Sadowska from September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024.

sation. It was an idea discussed with Muszyński, with Kuroń, with Czarnuch. These were model people for me*.

Together with Barbara Średniowska, J. Hamerski created the “Four Keys to One Man.” He always emphasised that these keys would not:

[...] had it not been for my masters, with Zbigniew Czarnuch, the creator of the Zielona Góra Makusyny, at the forefront. I rubbed shoulders with them and gained some experience. I had a guitar, a drum and a harmonica, and Basia had a rucksack full of books. With this load we wandered to the ‘76 and there it began (Kaminska, 2015).

“Łejery,” directly ideologically linked to “Otwarty,” was established in 1975 in Poznań as a children’s group theatre within the Scout Artistic Team (Sadowska, 2024, p. 97). It should be noted that J. Hamerski, a graduate not only from university but also from a pedagogical high school, an apprentice of Z. Czarnuch and his collaborator in H. Muszyński’s educational experiment, knew very well that creative expression prevents one-sided personality development. In the 1980s, J. Hamerski was joined by Elżbieta Drygas, who continues to work together with the founder of the “Łejery” to this day and forms a unique tandem with him (Sadowska, 2024, p. 97).

J. Hamerski also met with Scoutmaster J. Hamerski in the 1980s, as the “Łejery” became involved in the nationwide television programme *Magazyn Harcerzy Krąg* (Kamińska, 2015). It was broadcast once a week, “and once a month in a theatrical version. And we, together with Zbigniew Czarnuch and Witnica – the town where he had been active since 1982 – made an artistic programme for the *Krąg*” (Kamińska, 2015). It was then, as J. Hamerski recalls, that Wanda Chotomska wrote the anthem *Wtedy powstał nasz konik*, a song describing the conception of the work of the “Łejery” through the metaphor of an artistic, free and amiable green pegasus, which is forever inscribed in the history of the ensemble (Kamińska, 2015). It is “a horse not like other steeds, the artist can tell by its wings” (Hamerski, Drygas, 2011, p. 13). Had it not been for Scoutmaster Z. Czarnuch, the “Łejery” horse would perhaps have breezed just as magnificently, but perhaps a little differently.

The *Łejery Śpiewanki* are also inspired by the atmosphere of the Makusyny’s soirées. In the first *Historia Łejerów do śpiewania* (Hamerski, Drygas, 2000), the *story* of the *Łejery Śpiewanki* was written down by scout Jerzy and scout Ela. The authors explain: “Śpiewanki, słuchanki, ognisko, świecznik, gitara, harmoszka, klimaty, nastroje, Chotomska, Niewiarowska, Matuszewski, Siedlisko, Kosarzyska, and Załączce – these are some words that harmonise and resonate with the word: song” (Hamerski, Drygas, 2000, p. 3). As the founders explain, the first important songs for the “Łejery” output “[...] came

* Interview conducted with J. Hamerski by Katarzyna Sadowska in March 2024.

from Zielona Góra and Siedlisko – the places where Zbigniew Czarnuch's 'Makusyny' were active" (Hamerski, Drygas, 2000, p. 3).

In J. Hamerski's "łalfabeta," the term "Czarnuch" also appears. It is explained as follows: "Zbigniew Czarnuch – pedagogue, scoutmaster, publicist, founder of the legendary scouting strain 'Makusyny'" (Hamerski, n.d.).

Moreover, J. Hamerski adds that he was "[...] very fortunate to meet Zbigniew Czarnuch and his 'Makusyny' on his pedagogical path so that he could later draw fully on their educational and artistic methods, which became the programmatic foundation of the 'Ot-warty' and 'Łejery' strains" (Hamerski, n. d.).

On the occasion of its 40th anniversary, the founder of the Lubuski Makusyn wrote about the school and the Łejer pedagogy:

[...] are a significant part of the elite flagship flotilla of Polish social pedagogy. Why? Because show me another such environment in our country comprising educators, children, young people, parents and a multitude of disinterested allies, continuing the most beautiful traditions of positivistically oriented civic scouting, in which the individual development of the individual is so harmoniously combined with the interest of the whole, and which has so many measurable, outstanding and spectacular achievements to its credit (Czarnuch, 2016).

The scoutmaster believed that "Łejery," by virtue of the fact that they choose

[...] pedagogical route of upbringing through culture, created a unique in the country, authentic, still vibrant environment, which in its long duration as an artistic team not only enriched the world of culture of children and youth of the country with new creative aspects but also endowed its local environment with a school building filled with new pedagogical ideas and an authentic theatre – an important centre of not only the culture of children of Poznań but also of the country (Czarnuch, 2016).

The social and pedagogical work of Z. Czarnuch – summary

The work of Z. Czarnuch was analysed by B. Idzikowski, who states that the initiatives undertaken by the scoutmaster in the areas of culture were many and varied: "[...] from historical, cultural, literary and journalistic knowledge to research and pedagogical, dissemination and popularisation activities" (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 35). According to the author, Z. Czarnuch successfully combined "[...] in his activity symbolic culture with social culture and with the culture of being." He further stated that he identified in "[...] local, regional and intercultural space the world of symbols, forming individual and collective conscious-

ness, and the products of material culture, which are artefacts carrying symbolic meanings” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 35).

The same researcher argues that “on the axis of intentional orientations” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 35) Z. Czarnuch always remained the other person. As an educator and scoutmaster, he was constantly looking for “[...] ways and the right measure for people who are social beings, capable of independent choices, responsible, tolerant, open to the other” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 35). This idea was expressed by Z. Czarnuch in the statement: “I am first a human being and only, then a Pole, a European” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 35). In the opinion of the researcher, Z. Czarnuch independently and actively created a civil society, the world of small homelands, while the aim of his initiatives was “[...] to bring cultures and nations together in the work of building a new European space” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 35).

Furthermore, B. Idzikowski believes that the ideas of community revival and intercultural rapprochement were pursued by Z. Czarnuch, among others.

[...] by triggering formal initiatives (creation of third sector organisations, the establishment of task-profiled organisational structures), cooperation with local (local government, educational, cultural), supra-local and international institutions, but also by establishing interactions with action-ready individuals, referring to their biography, applied knowledge, subjective experience (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 35).

He calls Z. Czarnuch first and foremost “[...] a socio-cultural animator, moderator and leader of social environments of various scales” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). Among the initiatives undertaken by the scoutmaster, he mentions the organisation of scientific and popular science conferences and sessions, the organisation of institutions storing, researching and elaborating the products of symbolic and material culture (and among them, he points to the Regional Chamber, the Park of Signposts and Mileposts of Civilisation, regional magazines, monographs and collective works, care for monuments, field research and library queries, the creation of a regional library, etc.) (Idzikowski, 2012).

Among the beneficiaries of the activities of Scout Z. Czarnuch can be mentioned “a wide panorama of social subjects” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). The researcher points to children and young people, the inhabitants of Witnica and the Warta region, communities of the Polish-German borderland, Poles resettled from the Eastern Borderlands, as well as “compatriot organisations in Germany” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). According to B. Idzikowski, Z. Czarnuch was always looking for “what unites, what is common in experience, rather than what divides and antagonises” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). The author adds that the addressees of the scoutmaster’s activities were also “[...] local and administrative authorities of various levels, scientific circles and groups of regionalist activists” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36), among whom he cooperated particularly intensively with regionalist activists, because

it was with them that he was united “[...] by a common ground of shared views and a desire to work for both social change and the preservation of tradition” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36).

Z. Czarnuch’s starting point as an educator, historian and regionalist has always been “[...] the world closest to him, the small homelands, the place of living and experiencing being with others” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). However, Z. Czarnuch successfully defended himself “[...] against being trapped in the locality, a peculiarity for fear of creating the effect of local nationalism and opposing it to other, neighbouring nationalisms” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). A peculiar “phenomenon of Z. Czarnuch’s work is the point of access. These are trans-local, cross-border, intercultural, neighbourhood spaces. It is a vision of Europe as a common space without borders and chauvinisms, as a space painted with a mosaic of different ethnic, minority cultures” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). The researcher also notes that Z. Czarnuch describes, activates and recognises “[...] different social, cultural and territorial spaces. He creates a grid of new spaces by superimposing a private homeland on an ideological one, an uplifting, grassroots culture on cultural universals” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36).

All the activities of Z. Czarnuch were related to the hope “[...] for a world without wars, founded on dialogue and tolerance and friendship built on close, human contacts and not on political acts decreed by will” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). He enjoyed “[...] the revival of local activity, of interest in the place of life, its history and the people who once created that space (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36). The success for scout Z. Czarnuch was “[...] the unravelling of divisive notions and the ‘taming’ of people identified with revisionism and nationalism” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 36).

Among the difficulties he had to overcome, B. Idzikowski sees bureaucracy, “[...] unwillingness to cross the boundaries of political correctness for fear of violating the stereotypical image of the enemy” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 37). In addition to this, Z. Czarnuch lamented the lack of activity of the younger generation in cross-border and revitalisation activities (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 37), as well as the commercialisation “[...] of some, originally autotelic, initiatives, their appropriation by the authorities or the weakening of their activating potential when it requires work and commitment” (Idzikowski, 2012, p. 37).

Non omnis moriar

After the Scoutmaster’s death, the Lubuskie press wrote:

His life and work have been the subject of many publications, including the exhibition of the Museum of the Lubuskie Region “Zbigniew Czarnuch” (2014) and the catalogue “Makusyny – the Green Mountain Scouts from the Kornel Makuszyński strain” (2010). His contribution to building civil society and promoting historical heritage will remain a lasting part of the region’s memory (Nawlicka, 2024).

Scoutmaster Z. Czarnuch has over 300 publications to his credit, including. *Blota Warciańskie: kilka odsłon fenomenu doliny dolnej Warty* (Górzycy 2007), *Kościół w Dąbroszynie: panteon chwały rodów szlachty Dąbroszyńskiej* (Gorzów 2003), *Niebezpieczne drogi i podejrzeni młynarze* (Gorzów 2000), *Wspomnienia, relacje, listy i rozmowy Witniczan* (Witnica 1994), *Niemcy opuszczają Witnicę* (Witnica 1989), *Awers i rewers* (Łódź 2012). Among the numerous statements about his extraordinary activity, the following can be singled out:

I always wonder how Mr Zbigniew will keep up with it all. And I would like to be in such shape when I am Zbigniew's age. Such a condition, energy, knowledge and the need to share it, says Grażyna Kostkiewicz-Górska. But many talk about Zbigniew Czarnuch in this way, all those who have ever had contact with him (Ochwat, 2014).

He was so highly regarded in free Poland and so keen to honour him that in 2018 Zielona Góra councillors decided to name the more than 150-year-old oak tree on Makusyny Square after him:

The City Movement came up with the idea of honouring Zbigniew Czarnuch. In August, its activists proposed that the Green Mountain natural monument be named after the well-known social activist and educator. They submitted a draft resolution to the town hall to this effect, and on Tuesday the idea was applauded by councillors at a session (*Zbigniew Czarnuch patronem...*, 2018).

The pedunculate oak named after Z. Czarnuch, is located between Niepodległości Avenue and Kazimierza Wielkiego Street and is 150-200 years old; it is also a Green Mountain natural monument (*Zbigniew Czarnuch patronem...*, 2018).

The Scouts honoured Z. Czarnuch after his death with the following entry:

Dear Zbyszek Czarnuch!

Scoutmaster, Makusyn, Knight of the Order of the Smile!

Not so long ago we addressed you in the words of the sage Solomon:

"There is a time to plant and a time to reap,"

highlighting on your 90th birthday the size and diversity of your life's "harvest."

Today, with great pain, sorrow and sadness, we scouts say goodbye to you!

and, following Solomon, we must accept again that:

"There is a time to be born and a time to die."

So hard to believe!

Happy those who have met you, met you in person.

Your legend of the educator-authority, the creator of the extraordinary Makusyny

Strain and exploratory working methods must be enough for the young scouts. They will be left with material traces: The Makusyny Square, the Makusiki figurines. They will be left with stories that live on in Zielona Góra: about backyard teams with their competitions for the most beautiful backyard, about the graceful and free team of the Cudaki– famous all over Poland, about their Circus wandering around backyards, the Museum of Curiosities – the effect of penetrating attics; about the construction of garages for the “rovers” collected in the demobilised army, and later about the rebuilding of the castle in Siedlisko.

It is impossible to enumerate the diversity of you, your ideas and activities. In the memory of us old scouts, your image will remain, brimming with energy, charisma, eternal hustle and the belief that anything is possible. As we say goodbye to you, we thank you for being there. Thank you for infecting us with your passion and enthusiasm. You gave, you left a reflection and a conviction that scouting can combine traditions with an openness to develop socio-cultural, civic initiatives.

And although we know that there will be no such other Czarnuch – we bid you farewell in the belief that you are leaving fully fulfilled. You yourself wrote that you consider Makusyny to be your most important life achievement and pedagogical success.

You are leaving Zbyszek, but your Spirit remains with us. We believe that we will meet on the other side “by another fire on another night...”

Vigil! Scout Zbyszek (Wasyłkowska, 2024).

The work of Z. Czarnuch has remained in 317 author’s publications, in the Lejery songs, in the Alley with the ancient oak tree, in the pages of W. Hudon’s *Miracles* – an extraordinary book published in Warsaw in 1968 by the Scout Publishing House, in the exhibitions in the Museum of the Lubuska Land, in the catalogue of *Makusyny – the Zielona Góra scouts from the Kornel Makuszyński strain* (Nawlicka, 2024). This work will inspire the next generation of people working for human understanding.

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