

Scouting in the USA in the Light of Socio-cultural Changes in the Polish Emigrant Community

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Abstract: Scouting – at first, Polish scouting – appeared in the USA already before the First World War, mainly thanks to its founder, Andrzej Małkowski. Nevertheless, its heyday came in the interwar period, when the American-Polish community realized that it could become an effective tool for promoting Polish culture and interest in the land of their forefathers among Polish youth. After a pause caused by the Second World War, scouting activity resumed, but in a completely different form, i.e. as part of the post-war political and pro-independence emigration, which aimed to rebuild a sovereign Polish state, then in the Soviet sphere of influence. American scouting was then – as a US division – part of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP), which was temporarily active outside Poland and had its structures in several countries around the world. Politically and culturally oriented, and varied in form, the activities of post-war scouting have left a lasting mark in the USA. Among other things, it contributed to slowing down the assimilation of American Poles into the culture of their country of settlement and formed many outstanding social activists, such as leaders at various levels in the structures of the Polish American Congress. However, in the 21st century, it is facing more and more obstacles due to the decreasing number of Polish emigrants and the progressive assimilation of the younger generation of Poles into the culture of the country of settlement. The key process that determined the shape of the scouting movement in this country turned out to be the situation, structure, interests and values of the old and new emigration, as well as the evolution of its ideology and sense of national identity. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties, the ZHP USA continues to operate.

Keywords: scouting, emigration, Polish diaspora, USA, Cold War

Scouting in the USA before the Second World War

At the beginning of the 20th century, the American Polish diaspora constituted the largest concentration of Poles outside Poland. It was initiated by the establishment of the first Polish settlement, Panna Maria, in the state of Texas, in 1854, but the largest emigration wave from Polish territory took place between 1890 and 1914. Thanks to it, at the end of this period the size of Polish economic emigration (“for bread”) was

estimated at about two million people. The majority of its representatives settled in large cities and industrial districts in the Northeast of the USA and therefore had a predominantly working-class character. Concentration in urban centers and significant numbers influenced the high degree of integration and dynamism of the Polish diaspora. In this environment, political, social and cultural life flourished, centered on Catholic parishes led by Polish priests. In the specific conditions of separation from their native land, the role of the Catholic clergy as spiritual and life guides became even more important, which translated into the dominant influence of parishes on the development of the socio-cultural life of the first generation of Polish emigrants. In addition, Polish national and Catholic organizations, which enjoyed the mass support of emigrants from Poland, played an important role in their everyday life. Among the largest were the Polish Roman Catholic Union (*Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie*, 1873), the Polish National Alliance (*Związek Narodowy Polski*, 1880) and the Union of Polish Falcons of America (*Związek Sokołów Polskich w Stanach Zjednoczonych*, 1894).¹

Remarkably, these and other organizations were associations of mutual assistance, which as part of their activities provided insurance against extraordinary accidents (e.g. loss of life), which in a foreign environment provided their members and families with an elementary sense of security. Polish-language press of various political and philosophical hues played a particularly important role in integrating this community. Most of the Polish émigrés of the time regarded their stay on American soil as temporary, still bearing in mind their obligations to their homeland suffering under the partitions. This, in turn, strengthened their Polish national identity and their sense of integration into the foreign, American environment. This attitude was also fostered by the fact that Polish emigrants were placed at the bottom of the US social hierarchy at the time. Poorly educated Poles, alongside Italians, acted as the primary reservoir of unskilled labor, deprived of higher wages, prestige and social security. It was therefore no coincidence that in 1910 – after several decades of internal consolidation of the Polish diaspora in the US, the so-called “Seym of Exile” (*Sejm Wychodźstwa*) defined its purpose for functioning in this country as efforts to rebuild an independent Polish state, describing it as the “fourth partition district.” The ideology thus outlined further reinforced the natural tendency for emigrants from Polish lands to become integrated and to isolate themselves from their American surroundings in the form of voluntary confinement in Polish ghettos – neighborhoods of large cities – as well as to direct the activities of emigration associations, giving them an unambiguously political character.²

¹ Marcin Borys, *Polska emigracja do Stanów Zjednoczonych do 1914 roku* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2011), 135–207.

² Grzegorz Babiński, *Polonia w USA na tle przemian amerykańskiej etniczności* (Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza ARM, 2009), 327–30.

The First World War (1914–1918) accelerated the birth and popularization of Polish scouting abroad, including in the USA. As early as 1912, the American structures of the “Falcon” (TG Sokół) movement began – on the occasion of military training before the expected war – to popularize the scouting idea as an original and attractive synthesis of modern pedagogical thought, healthy lifestyle and the idea of fighting for Polish independence. By the outbreak of the First World War, there were already a dozen or so Polish scouting groups in the USA, but formally they operated within the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). In mid-1915, Andrzej Małkowski, the co-founder of Polish scouting, arrived in the USA and, as the most competent in this field, was quickly appointed Chief Scoutmaster of the Polish Falcons in America. Małkowski immediately threw himself into organizational and educational work, publishing many articles and several books and pamphlets on scouting, building and visiting the structures of Polish scouting and preparing human resources for the Polish army he wanted to create in the USA and Canada. In the first of his fields of activity he achieved considerable success, organizing new troops, conducting training and courses and popularizing the scouting ideals in the Polish media. As a result of his efforts, at the beginning of 1917, there were 1448 boy and girl scouts in the ranks of Polish scouting in the USA under the auspices of the “Falcon” (Sokół).³

In the latter field, he did not achieve so much, mainly because of the reluctance of Canada and the USA to form Polish units under the Canadian banner. In addition, he carried out conspiratorial activity in the USA, not in agreement with “Sokół,” creating clandestine cells under the name of the Polish Legion (Legion Polski), treated as cadres of a future Polish army. For this reason (the United States was then still a neutral country) he was forced to resign from his position as Chief Scoutmaster and move to Canada, where he enlisted in the Canadian Army, later fighting in France.⁴

³ Monika Piotrowska and Krzysztof Wasilewski, “Geneza i rozwój harcerstwa wśród Polaków na obczyźnie w latach 1912–1918,” in *Studia z dziejów harcerstwa na obczyźnie 1912–1946*, ed. Sylwia Łopato, Leonard Nowak and Marek Szczerbiński (Gorzów Wielkopolski: Zamiejscowy Wydział Kultury Fizycznej Poznańskiej AWF w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim, Polskie Towarzystwo Naukowe Kultury Fizycznej Oddział w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim, Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne Oddział w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim, Instytut Historii i Archiwistyki Polonijnej Oddział w Chicago, Polskie Towarzystwo Naukowe na Obczyźnie w Londynie, 2012), 45–9. According to W. Kukla and M. Miszczuk, the result of A. Małkowski’s work was an increase in the number of Polish scouts in the USA to 20,000–25,000 scouts and girl scouts, “which is more than in the Polish lands.” It is difficult to explain such a large discrepancy in data; perhaps the authors meant all Polish scouts in the USA, not only those under the auspices of the Polish Falcons of America and the BSA. For example, in the years 1915–1918, there were approximately 4,000 members in the Scouting Branches of the Polish National Council, which supported the legionary act. However, these scouts were listed separately by the authors. Cf. Wiesław Kukla and Marian Miszczuk, *Dzieje harcerstwa na obczyźnie 1912–2006. Zarys problematyki* (Warsaw: Tomiko, 2006), 18–9.

⁴ A. Małkowski died in a shipwreck. On his life and activities, see: Aleksander Kamiński, *Andrzej Małkowski* (Łódź: Wing, 2000).

After the end of the First World War, Polish emigration in the USA quickly took on the characteristics of Polonia, i.e. following the restoration of the independent Polish state, it abandoned the prioritization of its interests in favor of concern for the interests of Poles living on American soil. This new direction of activity caused disputes within its elite due to the fact that the older activists of Polish-American organizations, considering themselves first and foremost Americans of Polish origin, did not want to submit to the policy of the reborn Polish state, which demanded that Polonia pursue the political and economic interests of the Second Polish Republic on the territory of their countries of settlement. For example, at the Second Congress of the World Union of Poles Abroad (II Zjazd Światowego Związku Polaków Zagranicą) in 1934, representatives of the American Polish community refused to sign a resolution with such content, explaining that it conflicted with their sense of loyalty to the United States – the country of their residence. Younger activists, on the other hand, were inclined to accept the concept, which provoked a lively discussion and even sharp polemics in the pages of the Polish-American press in the USA.⁵

One of the fields of activity of the Polish community at that time, on which the activists of almost all its organizations were mostly agreed, became the restoration of Polish scout troops, which, after the departure of A. Małkowski had mostly ceased their activities. In the 1920s, some of these Polish scouting circles remained, e.g. there were about 5,000 scouts under the auspices of the Polish National Council (Polska Rada Narodowa). In addition, in the Falcon Association (Związek Sokołów) in the United States, scout troops were organized under the so-called *Działwa Szkolna*, i.e. the children's and youth branch of this association. In turn, the Polish scout troops belonging to the Boy Scouts of America included 600–700 girls and boys, especially in Buffalo (New York, Scoutmaster Leonard Gabryelewicz) and Hammond (Indiana, Scoutmaster Ostrowski). Most of these Polish scouts spoke little Polish, but considered themselves Polish. In contrast, a minority claimed to be Americans of Polish descent.⁶

A real breakthrough occurred in 1931, when Jan Romaszewicz became President of the Polish National Alliance. At that time, he began to realize the idea of creating a large scout organization, based on the structures of this association. The reasons for this decision were both down-to-earth and ideological in nature. Firstly, the new President wanted to increase the number of members, and at the same time those insured in the Alliance. Secondly, by doing so, he planned to strengthen his position in political games

⁵ Cezary Lusiński, *II Rzeczpospolita a Polonia 1922–1939. Geneza i działalność Rady Organizacyjnej Polaków z Zagranicy i Światowego Związku Polaków z Zagranicy* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 1998), 35, 73–6, 103–4.

⁶ Robert K. Daszkiewicz, *Harcerstwo Polskie poza granicami kraju od zarania do 1930 roku w relacjach i dokumentach*, prepared for publication by Leon Formela (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1983), 149–55.

within the organization. Thirdly, in this way he attempted to halt the rapid Americanization of the younger generation of the Polish community, combined with the loss of Polish national consciousness. He enlisted the help of, among others, Stanisław Kołodziejczyk, a former Sokół activist in the United States. He took up the post of Chief Scoutmaster of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association. From then on, over the next few years, the dynamic development of the new organization continued, with its numbers growing at an impressive rate, i.e. 200 members in 1932, 23,000 in 1933, 56,000 in 1934, and 80,000 and 1,441 instructors in 1938. The secret of such great organizational success was the use of the widely developed structures of the Polish National Alliance, its large human potential (300,000 members in 1936) and its financial potential (USD 25 million in 1936). Between 1933 and 1938, scouting delegations travelled to Poland five times for scouting courses, training and camps. In turn, two instructor expeditions went to the USA in 1936 and 1937 to support the young scout organization through training, courses and camps.

Nevertheless, the demise of this ambitious project came very quickly. In 1939, J. Romaszewicz lost the election, and his successor, Karol Rozmarek, under pressure from the Boy Scouts of America, agreed to transform the organization into Youth Troops (*Drużyny Młodzieżowe*), which meant that they effectively lost their scouting character. However, even if they had been able to continue their activities they would most likely not have been able to achieve lasting success of an organizational and educational nature. The reason for this was the top-down, administrative creation of scout troops and the lack of ideological, methodologically experienced and pedagogically trained instructional staff. For this reason, PNA Scouting resembled the proverbial “house of cards” organization.⁷

On the other hand, another scouting organization, much smaller in number, was built at the Polish Roman Catholic Union (*Związek Polski Rzymsko-Katolicki*), which in the 1930s had about 160,000 members, united by national and religious ties. The men's organization was part of the BSA, while the women's troops, known as *Córy Zjednoczenia*, were directly subordinate to the Chief Scoutmaster of the Union. The Chief Scoutmaster was Jan Troike, an American of Polish descent from a Kashubian family, who was also a troop leader of the BSA. This double organizational affiliation was good for Polish scouting, because it was subject to both the Alliance and the BSA, which contributed to raising the level of its programme and educational work. The basing of its activities on the Polish parish network also had a positive effect, because Catholic priests were better prepared to take care of scout troops than randomly selected Polish National Alliance scouting instructors. In 1938, PRCUA (*ZPRK*) scouting numbered 7,500 scouts and scoutmasters and 460 male

⁷ Kukla and Miszczak, *Dzieje harcerstwa*, 43–7.

and female instructors. In addition, scout troops were still being formed at the Union of Polish Women's Alliance in America (Wianki Związek Polek), within the Scouting Association of the Sons of Poland (Stowarzyszenie Synów Polski) and as "Orlęta Macierzy Polskiej" (creator Stanisław Kołodziejczyk – 800 members). After the USA joined the war in December 1941, the activities of these scouting organizations and structures ceased due to pressure from the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of America and the appointment of most instructors to the American army.⁸

Genesis and Organizational Development of PSO USA (ZHP USA)

During the Second World War, scouting activity in the United States virtually died out. The main reason for this phenomenon was the lack of male and female instructors, most of whom joined the American army or worked for the state elsewhere. Nevertheless, many former Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts worked in the leadership of the largest organization of Poles in America, i.e. the Polish National Alliance (Związek Narodowy Polski) and the Polish American Congress (Kongres Polonii Amerykańskiej) formed under it in 1944. It was they who supported the first, post-war initiatives to establish new scout units. Meanwhile, during the war and in the first years after its end, another wave of Polish emigration (approximately 200 000 people) came to the USA, distinguished by a relatively higher level of education than that of the "old" Polish community, and by different aspirations. Above all, this "new" group had a political orientation, i.e. it set itself the goal of rebuilding an independent and fully sovereign Polish state under the leadership of the supreme authorities of the Republic of Poland with its seat in London. It was therefore part of the pro-independence camp with precisely outlined intentions and a vision of Poland.⁹

Significantly, 1946 marked the beginning of a new stage of scouting activities abroad. On February 2, 1946, in Enghien near Paris, the instructors of the pre-war Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP), gathered together with its leader Dr. Michał Grażyński, decided to continue the organization's activities in exile, i.e. outside the borders of Poland. The extraordinary nature of the functioning of ZHP was emphasized by the addition of the term "in Exile" (Poza Granicami Kraju) in its name. However, it was not a new organization, but the same one which was established in the years 1910–1911

⁸ Ibid., 47–8.

⁹ Babiński, *Polonia w USA*, 330–40.

in the Polish lands, then operating on the territory of the Second Republic in the inter-war period.¹⁰

In the first years after the end of the war, representatives of the instructor corps and senior scouts who belonged to the ZHP began to arrive in the USA – mainly from Germany and Great Britain – and who, on the one hand, had great experience from scouting activities in pre-war Poland, the Middle East during the war or in post-war Germany, as well as enthusiasm for educational work using the scouting method. On the other hand, they were naturally looking for opportunities to start such activities. This was encouraged by the chief authorities of the ZHP with its headquarters in London, and some were even sent there with the specific mission of creating structures for a scouting organization on American soil. This meant completely different conditions for building a scouting organization compared to the pre-war period, when experienced instructors were practically non-existent. Initially, the first troops and patrols were formed in major cities with large Polish communities, such as Chicago, Buffalo or Detroit.¹¹

As rightly noted by Beata Pawlikowska, this did not mean that their first steps on American soil were easy. ZHP members were often intellectuals, i.e. people who were educated or aiming to gain new qualifications overseas. They persevered in learning English, acquiring degrees and climbing the ranks of professional careers in the American realm. However, they were often met with incomprehension by the established, so-called old émigrés, who prided themselves on their thriving Polish organizations and institutions. They did not understand the new emigrants arriving after the war, especially their political motivation for staying in the USA and their social aspirations to enter the middle class of American society. Together with the Americans, they often mocked their strange accent, a mixture of Polish and British English, as well as their manners, customs and, above all, the stubbornness with which they refused to assimilate into American culture, insisting on their Polish national identity.¹²

However, the friction between the old and new émigrés also had a deeper basis. The latter had a clearly outlined profile of action, which was to fight for the restoration of an independent Polish state, and thus to put Polish interests in the foreground. To this end, taking advantage of their elite character, new emigrants tried to impose their dominance on the old emigration in the form of taking over the leadership of the American Polish

¹⁰ Juliusz L. Englert and Jerzy Witting, *W harcerskiej służbie. ZHP na obczyźnie 1946–1996* (London: Naczelnictwo ZHP poza granicami kraju, 1997).

¹¹ Kukla and Miszczuk, *Dzieje harcerstwa*, 89–90.

¹² Beata Pawlikowska, "Rozwój i działalność Związku Harcerstwa Polskiego – Okręg Stany Zjednoczone (w zarysie)," in *Światowe Harcerstwo. Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego na obczyźnie w latach 1918–2018. Studia, szkice i materiały*, edited by Marek Wierzbicki (Lublin–Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2018), 233–7.

community and setting its political goals in order to use its potential to exert pressure on the American authorities. Meanwhile, the Polish émigré circles, incumbent in the USA for decades, were already firmly assimilated into American culture and society and did not want to put the interests of the Polish state first. While nourishing sentiment and sympathy for enslaved Poland, and even providing tangible material aid to compatriots living there, they considered the interests of the United States paramount and did not intend to serve the Polish *raison d'état*.

Hence, at the end of the Second World War and immediately after its end, they did not support the anti-Soviet direction of the Polish post-war emigration policy. Besides, the old emigration (*Polonia*) of plebeian and peasant origin and character felt that they were American citizens loyally serving their new homeland, which enabled them a perceptible social and material advancement. Meanwhile, the representatives of the post-war new émigrés regarded the collapse of the Polish state as a catastrophe and their stay in the USA as bringing them social declassification. Despite initial misunderstandings and friction, these two emigration circles gradually grew closer over the following decades, especially when the American government, in the 1960s and 1970s, began to give stronger support to the anti-communist post-war emigration. Despite initial difficulties, scouting instructors were able to establish organizational structures covering the United States, which formed part of the aforementioned Polish Scouting and Guiding Association, which in the post-war period was active in more than a dozen countries on four continents of the world.¹³

On the East coast of the USA, scouting activities gained momentum after the ZHP authorities in Germany appointed Scoutmaster Ryszard Stańkowski as their contact instructor in the late 1940s. As a result, he was approached by male and female instructors looking for opportunities to serve in the United States, and smaller scouting circles – in addition to the larger ones established in major cities such as Chicago and Detroit – appeared in centers such as Albany, Buffalo and New York, New York, Bantam, Connecticut, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Jersey, New Jersey. In 1951, the Supreme Council of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHPdzpgK) established a District of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP) in the USA, headed by Scoutmistress Wanda Kamieniecka-Grycko as a delegate of the Supreme Council, the President of the District Board, Scoutmistress Ewa Gierat, a delegate of the Girl Scout Headquarters and the first commander of the Girl Scout Troop, and Scoutmaster Jan Kanty Miska, a delegate of the Boy Scout Headquarters and at the same time the first commander of

¹³ Tadeusz Paleczny, *Ewolucja ideologii i przemiany tożsamości narodowej Polonii w Stanach Zjednoczonych w latach 1870–1970* (Warsaw–Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1989), 193–238.

the Boy Scout Troop. These appointments were confirmed by election by the instructors' circle at the first instructors' convention held in Detroit in 1952.¹⁴

The first scout troops on the West Coast were established in California, thanks to the efforts of Scoutmistress Wanda Kamieniecka-Grycko, who in February 1958 founded a troop of scouts and a troop of girl scouts at the Polish parish in Los Angeles. Although after seven years, in 1964, due to the parish's lack of interest in cooperating with the scouting movement, their work ceased, it was reactivated in 1974 thanks to the initiative of Scoutmaster Rev. Zbigniew Olbraś. It was then that troops were formed in San Francisco, which, together with the Los Angeles community, in 1976 formed the joint scout troops of girl scouts "Mazowsze" and boy scouts "Kraków." In 1986, Scoutmistress Małgorzata Szternal-Gołubiec organized a girl scout troop in Seattle, Washington among Polish immigrants settled in the USA after martial law was declared. After a few years, in 1993, a coeducational independent unit "Szczep Kaszub" was established.¹⁵

Structures and Functioning of Organizations

In the second decade of the 21st century, ZHPdzpgK functioned in five locations. The "Podhale" Scout Troop and the "Warmia" Scout Troop operate on the East Coast. Their summer camps take place on rented land, notably at the Scouts' staging area "Bieszczady," owned by the "Warmia" Scout Troop, while scout camps were organized for many years on land owned by the ZNP in Palmer, Massachusetts, and at the Doylestown Shrine (American Czestochowa, Pennsylvania). The latter was home to 11 Circles of Friends of Scouting (Koło Przyjaciół Harcerstwa) in 2017, as well as the Connecticut Circuit, which administers the legal registration of the United States District of the Polish Scout Organization.¹⁶

In the central states, the Michigan division was based in Detroit, which included the Girl Scout Troop "Ziemia Rodzinna," the Boy Scout Troop "Kresy," the instructor troop "Iskry," as well as the Circle of Friends of Scouting. The "Białowieża" center belonged to the District, where all the bivouacs, camps and scout camps of the units from its area were held. In the same part of the USA, there was the Chicago division, associating the Scout Troop "Tatry," the Scout Troop "Warta," the instructors' troop "Pasięka," the instructors' troop "Siewcy," two Circles of the Friends of Scouting (one of them, i.e. KPH Chicago

¹⁴ Ewa Gierat, *Powojenna historia harcerstwa w Stanach Zjednoczonych, Historia ZHP w USA 1949–1989* (Detroit: Zarząd Okręgu ZHP, 1990), 11–2.

¹⁵ Kukla and Miszczuk, *Dzieje harcerstwa*, 90–1.

¹⁶ Pawlikowska, *Rozwój i działalność*, 248–50.

has a center – the Norwid Scout Camp in Crivitz, Wisconsin, three artistic groups: the only scout folk dance groups in the then ZHPdpgK “Lechici” and “Orlęta,” the scout artistic group “Wichry” and the last Circle of Senior Scouting in the USA (the first of the circles “Orły Kresowe” disbanded in 2016 due to the old age and poor health of its members).

On the West coast, scouting units functioned in the Girl Scout Troop “Kaszuby” (four units and the female instructor troop “Zdrój” in Washington State) and the Girl Scout Troop “Mazowsze” and Boy Scout Troop “Kraków,” which operated in California, Arizona and Colorado (the boy troop also had units in Washington State). California was also the headquarters of two circles of friends of scouting (KPH). In 2016 the United States district had approximately 2,700 members, including 1,000 adults, and was the most numerous district of ZHPdpgK.¹⁷

Throughout all decades of the post-war history of scouting in the USA, the theme of inadequate financial support from the “old” (pre-war) and “new” (post-war) émigrés has recurred in the reports of its authorities. In spite of this, some of their circles remembered the need to provide assistance to an organization that aimed to raise a group of young people who remembered their Ancestral Country. In the first thirty years of the District’s existence, material support from veterans’ associations was important, as they were willing to fund new scout flags, subsidize scout rallies, bivouacs, expeditions and camps, lend their own premises for meetings or take care of the activities of the troops and scouts. The structures of the Polish Combatants’ Association in the United States (Stowarzyszenie Kombatantów Polskich w Stanach Zjednoczonych) were particularly significant in this field. However, in the 1990s, the ranks of this and other associations began to cull due to the passage of time and the dying out of this community. Importantly, in many cases, the disbanded veterans’ associations handed over their last material resources to the scouts, in recognition of their patriotic activities. Since then, scouting on American soil has been forced to secure all financial resources on its own.¹⁸

Other important circumstances that often hindered scouting work were the long distances and transport costs, problems with cooperation in the emigration and Polish communities, and the difficulty of maintaining the Polish language in scouting communities. As far as the first issue is concerned, scouting activities were greatly hampered by the considerable distances not only between the various divisions, but also between the patrols in the troops, the headquarters of the troops and the places where the scouts lived, and finally to their camping or bivouac sites. Significant distances meant higher transport

¹⁷ Kukla and Miszczuk, *Dzieje harcerstwa*, 90–1.

¹⁸ Piotr Kardela, *Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów w Stanach Zjednoczonych w latach 1953–1990* (Olsztyn–Białystok: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2015).

costs, which made it much more difficult for scout units that were forced to raise funds for their activities on their own.¹⁹

On the other hand, the Polish émigré community at the time was a conglomerate of numerous associations, foundations, schools and other institutions, enriched by a vast network of parishes, in which scouting was sometimes regarded as competition for Polish Saturday schools or church formations. This also limited its possibilities for action. On top of this, there were issues of assimilation of children and young people into the culture of the country of settlement. The departure of part of the younger generation from the language of their ancestors in favor of English played an important role among them. ZHP as an organization consistently upheld the cultivation of the Polish language, especially during meetings, activities and scouting trips. This, in turn, deterred those who did not prioritize this issue. The scouting work was also not facilitated by the position of many American schools, which in many cases pressured Polish children and teenagers to attend extracurricular activities, often organized on Saturdays, i.e. on the day when classes in Polish schools and scout meetings were held.²⁰

On the other hand, an essential factor which made it possible to operate under such complicated conditions was undoubtedly the commitment of the staff of instructors, who were responsible for the direction and shape of educational work in ZHP USA. As in other units of this type, female and male instructors worked on a voluntary basis without receiving any remuneration.

An insufficient number of female and male instructors was always the greatest barrier hampering the development of the organization in the United States. Its cause was firstly the failure of a considerable part of the instructional staff to join the scout and cub troops, which automatically overloaded all active instructors. They were overburdened with duties not only in the scouting field, but also with social work in Polish organizations, as they were often asked to contribute where there was no one willing to help. The difficulty of maintaining personal contacts in the vast areas of the United States also caused serious problems in forming cadres in the younger generation of scouting members. Therefore, in the 1980s, the average age of the cadre was relatively high, while the instructors themselves were overburdened with educational work in patrols and troops and with duties in non-scouting environments, such as helping to run classes in Polish Saturday schools and organizing various patriotic, religious and Polish community events.²¹

¹⁹ See: Archive of the Head of the Polish Scout Association (hereafter: ANZHP), B.3.19.2., Report of the Head of the Scout Association [USA District] for the year 1970–1971, no pagination.

²⁰ Pawlikowska, *Rozwój i działalność*, 249–50.

²¹ *Znicz. Wiadomości Harcerskie* (USA), no. 3 (1986): 6.

Idea, Method, Program of Scouting Work

ZHP USA pursued the ideological profile of its scouting organization, which combined loyalty to the countries of settlement with a strong aspiration to rebuild an independent, fully sovereign Polish state. Thus, the post-war scouting had a clear emigrant character, and not only a Polish one, as it participated in a political mission based on patriotism, which clearly distinguished it from the Polish organizations of the so-called “old Polonia” in the USA. And indeed, until 1956, the instructors of ZHP in the USA (as in other countries where the association was active) lived in anticipation of the outbreak of the Third World War, which would result in the reactivation of the Polish Armed Forces in the West under the command of General Władysław Anders, and their participation in the victorious war of the Western world against the Soviet Union. A war that was to bring the liberation of Poland from Soviet domination.

When it did not happen, the circles of post-war emigration had to switch to a “long march” in the form of many years of daily work aimed at maintaining the national identity of subsequent generations of Polish emigrants and their mobilization for the fight to rebuild an independent Poland. The instructional circles of the ZHP USA understood their role in a similar way. Still, the main goal of the exile, post-war scouting was to serve for the benefit of an independent Poland and to educate scouts to be righteous people and nationally conscious Poles. At the same time, the principle of loyalty to one’s country of settlement and integration into its society, culture and institutions was not forgotten.²²

The specificity of educational work in exile posed two significant challenges for post-war scouting abroad, namely assimilation tendencies visible particularly in the young generation of Polish emigrants and secularization processes resulting in the abandonment of religious faith or growing indifference to the religious practices of the Catholic Church. These were particularly evident in a country such as the USA, with its individualistic and materialistic culture, whose power of influence increased even more after the Second World War, when the USA gained the status of the world’s greatest military and economic force. The rapidly rising standard of living of its citizens also facilitated the social advancement of immigrants from Poland, even though they occupied lower rungs in the American social hierarchy until the early 1970s.

In spite of these processes, scouting was one of the strongest educational institutions of the emigration, which with its influence slowed down the assimilation processes of the Polish diaspora, above all by popularizing the Polish language among Polish children and teenagers, which was a challenge for the natural abandonment of the Polish language in

²² See, for example, ANZHP, G/1/6, Reports of the Chief Scout Council for 1955–1960, without pagination of pages.

the second generation in the emigration environment; also by introducing young emigrants to the achievements of Polish national culture, familiarizing them with Polish history, deepening national consciousness, which strengthened the bond with Polishness in a situation of daily confrontation with a diversity of ethnic cultures on American soil. Scouting in the USA gave expression to its beliefs by participating in patriotic celebrations on 3 May, 11 November or Pulaski Days, as well as numerous services, pilgrimages and spiritual retreats. An important factor strengthening the scouting structures in the implementation of their patriotic educational programme turned out to be the next (third) wave of emigration from Poland, which in 1980–1997 brought about 300,000 Poles to the USA. Although there were many problems with the adaptation of the newly arrived emigrants to scouting work in the American reality, incomers significantly strengthened the potency of the Polish community, a large part of which was interested in maintaining ties with the native culture and the Polish-speaking environment.²³

Scouting in the United States faced a number of difficulties in its daily educational work. Firstly, scouting activities outside the home country (i.e. in the conditions of emigration) took place in abnormal conditions, compared to life in Poland. It was made more difficult by the very necessity to carry it out in a foreign political and socio-cultural environment, which forced members to adapt to its administrative, economic, social and cultural requirements. On top of this, there was the need to conform to the situation, needs and requirements of the Polish community, which showed a varied level of assimilation, and thus also a non-uniform degree of interest in the culture and situation of Poland. In addition, the scouting movement had to face the extremely expansive American culture, which was open to immigrants. The strong focus of American society on material issues, together with the spread of an individualistic culture, did not encourage Polish immigrants to send their children to an organization that preached the primacy of spiritual values over material ones and taught sacrifice for others, especially for the then enslaved Poland. No wonder then that scouting in the United States (as in other countries) was elitist in character, and its numbers in George Washington's land never exceeded 3,000 members.²⁴

The situation in this respect became even more complicated in the 1970s. Influenced by the cultural revolution associated with the 1968 student protests, modern, progressive cultural trends, leftist and liberal in nature, were gaining popularity in the USA at the time, standing in opposition to traditional culture based on Christianity. Their essence

²³ Lubomir Zyblikiewicz, *USA* (Warsaw: Trio, 2004), 215–82; Marek Wierzbicki, *Harcierz-Żołnierz-Obywatel. Zygmunt Lechosław Szadkowski 1912–1995* (Lublin: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2016), 88–104; Ewa Karpińska-Gierat, *Korzenie i owoce* (Colorado Springs: Language Bridges, 1998).

²⁴ ANZHP, A.2.8.4., Hm. L. Kliszewicz, Polish elements in scouting work in exile, no date [probably 1958], card 95–100.

was a rejection of the hierarchical nature of society, authority, cultural taboos and moral values based on the Decalogue. Under these conditions, the desire to free the individual from the control of society, in order to allow unfettered individual development, began to dominate in university and school environments.²⁵

These trends also reached scouting, calling into question the use of many educational tools such as discipline, organizational hierarchy, punishment or demands. The older generation of instructors often saw these trends as a threat to scouting in its traditional form, but the younger generation no longer did. This was accompanied by a decrease in the level of involvement of the instructional staff in educational work in the troops, entailing increasing methodological deficiencies, e.g. neglect of the deputation system and environmental studies (*puszczaństwo*), and less interest in Polish culture and history, and even a gradual likening of the idea, methodology and programme of Polish scouting to American scouting to the detriment of patriotic upbringing in the Polish spirit. These unfavorable tendencies were perceived by the most conscious and committed part of the instructors' corps, which, through discussions, persuasion, modification of the programme of scouting work and staff training, tried to improve the position of scouting on American soil.²⁶

Added to this were problems with the understanding of the Polish national identity of scouts. In the second half of the 1970s and in the following decade, there were demands to revise the content of the Scout Promise in the context of the doubts of many younger instructors, who believed that their proper homeland was the United States, which they should primarily serve. On the other hand, the older generation of instructors – the founders of the ZHP USA – incidentally already in minority at the time, regarded such proposals as undermining the very essence of post-war scouting abroad. While the former felt more like Americans of Polish origin, the latter still regarded themselves as Poles, carrying out a mission on foreign, American soil to reactivate an independent Polish state. Nevertheless, the majority of representatives of both sides of the dispute considered a discussion on the subject necessary, which led to a consensus and leaving the most important ideological declarations unchanged.²⁷

²⁵ On the moral revolution in the aftermath of the 1968 student protests see, for example, Anna von der Golz, ed., *Talking 'Bout My Generation". Conflicts of Generation Building and Europe's 1968* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011).

²⁶ ANZHP, B.3.18., Hm. Ryszard Miziołek, On scouting in the USA and the scouting method, 1971, k. 41–48; ANZHP, B.3.18., Report of the Chairman of the ZO USA for the period 29 X 1972 to 19 V 1973, k. 89–90; 91–98; ANZHP, B.3.18, Minutes of the Plenary Meeting of the U.S. District Board of the U.S.A., held on May 19, 1973, held in the Scouting common room at the 78th A[ssociation]W[etheran] A[rmy]P[olska] Outpost, k. 91–98.

²⁷ *Znicz. Wiadomości Harcerskie* (USA), no. 2 (1986): 5–6.

In addition to ideological problems, the structures and units of the ZHP USA had to struggle with difficulties of a programme, methodological and purely human nature. The first of these was the issue of Senior Scouting (*Starsze Harcerstwo*), which was one of the four parts of ZHP abroad. According to the regulations in force, its mission was to transfer the values and customs of scouting, e.g. fraternity, solidarity, mutual help, selflessness, the ability to work together for the common good, to the area outside scouting, i.e. to the so-called adult society. In addition, the Senior Scout circles were not subordinate to the regiments in the individual districts, but directly to the ZHP Headquarters in London, where their leader was also located. As it soon turned out, in the day-to-day activities of the District units, the older scouts mostly did not show much activity. They did not have a clearly outlined program. Moreover, they did not get involved in the fields served by other scout units in the United States, closing themselves within the circle of their own issues and problems. Therefore, their passivity and isolation from the scouting community caused much irritation among female instructors and instructors involved in the day-to-day educational work in scout troops. On American soil, eight Senior Scouting circles were formed in the late 1940s, then, in the 1950s, only three were formed, which gradually reduced their activity due to the advanced age of their members. The younger members, on the other hand, did not appear. In 2016, one of the circles also ceased to operate.²⁸

Some elements of the scouting methodology were functioning poorly, such as the patrol system, which consisted of – extremely educationally effective – work in small groups (*zastępy*), led by naturally selected patrol leaders (*zastępowi*). In the 1970s there was a noticeable decline in this method of working, with an emphasis almost exclusively on working in larger groups – troops (*drużyny*). However, this was somewhat natural in those times, when even the organization of a troop meeting posed many problems, given the necessity for parents to transport their children by car over distances sometimes reaching hundreds of kilometers, and only on Saturdays, when Polish Saturday Schools were in session.²⁹

Activity

The basic aspect of scouting in the USA was everyday educational work, carried out in troops, circles, districts and regiments, similar to that which was carried out before the

²⁸ See: Eugenia Maresch, "Kręgi Starszoharcerskie – ich początek i zmierzch," in *Światowe harcerstwo*, 147–59; ANZHP, A.2.6.2., United States District Board Report 1962, no pagination; ANZHP, A.2.2.13., United States District Board Report 1972, no pagination.

²⁹ ANZHP, B.19.4., Report of the Girl Scout Troop Commander of the United States of America, 1977, no pagination.

war, during the wartime exile or in the first post-war years in Germany, Great Britain, India, Africa and the Middle East. It was based on the Scout Law and the Scout Promise, which contained the most important moral values and ideals that the scout movement wanted to instill in its participants. This was not an easy process due to numerous difficulties and obstacles that hampered scouting work, e.g. the great distances between the various circles, the reluctance of many young Polish emigrants to impose spiritual demands on themselves. Moreover, only 40% of the incoming instructors took an active part in educational work, while the rest explained their passivity by personal and family problems. In spite of this, the District authorities did not give up, but consistently worked on training the younger staff, creating new troops, cub packs and district units as well as supporting the already functioning ones, e.g. by providing professional methodical magazines and visiting scout centers.³⁰

Due to their wide area of activity, every few years they organized District rallies to commemorate key historical events for the Polish people, to celebrate important anniversaries in the history of scouting and to integrate the staff of instructors, scouts and scoutmasters, who – due to the long distances involved – rarely met directly in a wider group of troops from the district and especially from the regiment. The first of these took place in 1955, followed by others in 1960, 1966, 1974, 1985, 1988, 2006, 2015.³¹

An important field of scouting activity were various patriotic and political actions, such as collecting funds for the National Treasury, providing Polish political emigration with at least a small amount of funding for independence activities; collections of food, clothing and medicine for compatriots in Poland, patriotic celebrations associated with anniversaries of important events, such as national uprisings, regaining independence, battles of the Second World War, etc. The celebrations of the 3rd of May Constitution Day, held by the Polish community since 1891, were among the most important, Independence Day (traditionally on 11 November), successive anniversaries of the Battle of Monte Cassino or the Katyn Massacre. Scouts performed all kinds of services, from honor guards at graves and monuments, participation in roll calls of remembrance, medical and orderly services to participation in holy masses. Visually appealing, the presence of uniformed scout units invariably received a positive response from the spectators or participants in these celebrations. It also brought together the circles of veterans of the Polish Armed Forces and scouting. For the veterans, former soldiers of the Polish armed

³⁰ ANZHP, A.2.11.3., Report of the US District Board, 1954, k. 42–43.

³¹ ANZHP, B.3.19.5., Hm. J. K. Miska, Report of the ZHP USA District Rally, no date [probably September 1955], no pagination; Gierat, *Powojenna historia*, 59–62; ANZHP, E.2.5.137; *Biuletyn Informacyjny Naczelnictwa ZHP* (Londyn), no. 151 (1966): 878–9.

formations, it was the youth gathered in the ranks of the scouting movement that constituted their closest ideological environment.³²

As the years passed and their own ranks dwindled, the veterans' organizations, led by the SPK (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów), were concerned to find continuators of the struggle for the restoration of an independent Polish state. They chose scouting, because ZHP in exile emphasized the idea of independence most strongly in its declarations and deeds. For this reason, in August 1969, during the anniversary celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino, they made a solemn handover of the banners of the PSZ units to the young generation of the independence emigration, which was represented mainly by the ZHP. On a day-to-day basis, the SPK tried to support scouting structures by providing material and moral support, e.g. by subsidizing activities, making premises available, and promoting scouting themes in veterans' magazines.³³

Post-war scouting also took care to maintain cooperation with the émigré scouting organizations of nations enslaved by the Soviet Union, such as the Hungarians, Latvians, Estonians and Ukrainians, for example. To this end, it jointly founded the Associated International Scout and Guide Organisation (AISGO), a scouting federation that served as a reminder of the freedom aspirations of Central and Eastern European countries. Its international role was not very big, but nevertheless for scouts it was an opportunity to go beyond the exclusively Polish environment.³⁴

In 1996, the 4th World Course – Training Camp “Cadre 2000” was held at the Hoover Center Scouts of the USA, Yorkville, Illinois, which was organized by the ZHP USA. It was attended by female and male instructors from Great Britain, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, France, Canada, Germany, the United States and Poland (a total of 125 candidates for the ranks of assistant scoutmaster/assistant scoutmistress (*podharc mistrz/podharc mistrzyni*) and scoutmaster/scoutmistress (*harc mistrz/harc mistrzyni*). In addition to the implementation of trials for the instructor ranks, the course program included classes in many different fields, including ideological education, scouting methodology, pedagogy, psychology, ethics, international relations, history and contemporary scouting. An important aim of the course was also to integrate the instructional staff of the ZHP from its various districts and centers and scout organizations.³⁵

³² Pawlikowska, *Rozwój i działalność*, 247.

³³ Piotr Kardela, *Stanisław Gierat 1903–1977. Działalność społeczna i polityczna* (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Promocyjne “Albatros”, 2000), 466; Kardela, *Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów*, 301–2, 305–7.

³⁴ Pawlikowska, *Rozwój i działalność*, 246.

³⁵ Englert and Witting, *W harcerskiej służbie*, 304–6.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of scouting activities in the USA should be considered in several aspects, i.e. as a historical one, connected with events and processes of the most recent Polish history, a socio-cultural one, resulting from the evolution of the cultural profile and social needs of the Polish diaspora in the USA, and a political one, connected with the influence of the Polish state for the realization of its political and economic goals in the international arena and the idea of the struggle for Polish independence in the 20th century. Its strongest influence and reach was when Polish emigration in the United States pursued the mission of fighting for the realization of Poland's independent existence, and thus put its interests first, while the USA was treated as a foreign country, a place to earn money and only a temporary residence. This was the case during the years of the First World War and after the Second World War, when the national ideology of the "old" Polonia or the "new wave" of emigration from Poland put the interests of the Polish state in the foreground. At that time, its representatives most readily accepted the national ideals and values and political goals that were strongly emphasized by Polish scouting (*harcerstwo*). This, in turn, gave its activities a strong political and pro-independence character. In other periods, such as the interwar period, scouting had national autonomy but was more or less influenced by American scouting.

The key process which, in my opinion, determined the shape of the scouting movement in this country turned out to be the situation, structure, interests and values of the old and new emigration, as well as the evolution of its ideology and sense of national identity. In the second half of the 19th century, the emigrants from the Polish lands, peasants from the Russian and Austrian partitions, mostly had a poorly formed national consciousness. It was only in the first decade of the 20th century that a significant national revival took place among them, which brought a deepening of ties with Poland and a mass interest in the idea of its resurrection. During this period, the Polish community of the time referred to the Polish diaspora in the USA as the "fourth partition district." After the restoration of the independent Polish state, there was a change in the national ideology of the Polish American diaspora, towards the internalization of the values and interests of American society and culture. By the 1930s, most of its representatives already recognized themselves as Americans of Polish origin, loyal to the American state. The scout troops operating at the time promoted Polish culture, but treated it as an element of the identity of Polish emigrants, as members of an ethnic group forming part of the multicultural American society. They also succumbed, to a lesser or greater extent, to pressure from American scouting, which sought to bring scouting circles under its control.

The period of the Second World War deepened assimilation processes among the Polish community, and at the same time initiated the influx of a new wave of wartime and post-war emigration from Poland. As already mentioned, they put the interests of the Polish state first, treating their stay as temporary until the victory over the Soviet Union and the removal of the communist regime ruling Poland. The American structures of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP), established in the early 1950s, also operated in this spirit, carrying out the Polish independence mission and popularizing national culture among the émigré community. Their leadership, like the rest of the post-war Polish diaspora in the USA, recognized themselves as the political and ideological representation of the Polish state in the United States.

Scouting work was not easy, given the materialization of American society, the numerical superiority of the old émigrés, their considerable degree of assimilation into the American environment and the relatively rapid rate of Americanization of the second generation of wartime and post-war émigrés. For while the Poles born in Poland still remembered Poland and considered it natural to spread the independence mission in its interests, the next generation, i.e. the generation of their children born on American soil – generally speaking – no longer had such a conviction. For them, the United States was the first homeland to which they owed loyalty, all the more so because the status of citizen of the world's greatest superpower was extremely attractive. Thus, the process of assimilation of the representatives of the post-war emigration was also taking place, albeit without the transition of an ethnic group within American society.³⁶

Hence, already in the 1970s, older instructors complained about the weak interest of their younger successors in the leadership of ZHP USA structures in the Polish patriotic programme. In turn, this younger cadre of instructors, living in the American environment on a daily basis, felt strongly attached to their American homeland and therefore sometimes expressed doubts about the advisability of putting the imaginary homeland – Poland – in the forefront of the scouts' everyday educational work. In the end, apparently under pressure from the older generation of instructors and the chief authorities of ZHP, who proposed a model of bicultural integration of the members of their organization, i.e. acceptance of both Polish culture and the country of settlement (similarly to the interests of Poland and the USA), there was no change to the wording of the Scout Promise, however, the problem of national and cultural self-identification of the members and educators of the scouting organization surfaced from time to time in the following decades of the functioning of scouting abroad. An important turning point in this respect was the restoration of a sovereign Polish state after the fall of communism in 1989, which automatically meant the end of the independence mission of political emigration, including

³⁶ Paleczny, *Ewolucja ideologii*, 229–42.

ZHP operating outside Poland. The female and male instructors, themselves already integrated into American society and the old Polish community, were then looking for a new ideological and programmatic model, debating, among other things, the issue of the proportion of Polishness, i.e. Polish history and culture and scouting in educational programs, and especially the question of whether they should raise scouts to be American Poles or Americans of Polish origin.³⁷

Undoubtedly, the activities of post-war scouting have left a lasting mark in the United States. Among other things, it contributed to slowing down the rate of assimilation of American Poles into the culture of their country of settlement and formed many outstanding social activists, such as leaders at various levels in the KPA structures. Nevertheless, despite its evident successes, the effects of these efforts were undermined by the relatively small size of the scouting organization compared to the number of children and adolescents whose families expressed interest in Polish culture and the relatively high average age of its members. Most importantly, the end of emigration from Poland to the USA at the end of the 1990s has resulted in a noticeable acceleration of assimilation processes in the local Polish community, including the scouting movement, in the 21st century, e.g. in terms of departing from the Polish language in everyday life.

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³⁷ *Znicz. Wiadomości Harcerskie (USA)*, no. 34 (1991): 8–9.

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