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THE PROCESS OF EDUCATING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCOUTING “ZAWISZA” FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN SCOUTING

Abstract

Upbringing is an indispensable element of the growing up of children and youth. In the first years of life, it is the parents who exert the greatest influence on the child, trying to show the child what is right and what is wrong. Over time, when the child grows up, parents are no longer alone in this difficult process, because they are helped by the school, the community of the Church and various associations to which children and young people can belong. This association includes the Association of Catholic Scouting “Zawisza” Federation of European Scouting. It is an association that follows a decades-old scouting tradition and is a movement based on the principles of the Roman Catholic religion.

Keywords: education, children and youth, scouting, “Zawisza” association

PROCES WYCHOWANIA DZIECI I MŁODZIEŻY W STOWARZYSZENIU HARCERSTWA KATOLICKIEGO „ZAWISZA” FEDERACJA SKAUTINGU EUROPEJSKIEGO

Abstrakt

Wychowanie jest nieodzownym elementem dorastania dzieci i młodzieży. W pierwszych latach życia to rodzice wywierają największy wpływ na dziecko, próbując wskazać mu, co jest dobre, a co złe. Z biegiem czasu, gdy dziecko dorasta, rodzice nie są już osamotnieni w tym trudnym procesie, gdyż pomaga im szkoła, wspólnota Kościoła oraz różne stowarzyszenia, do których dzieci i młodzież mogą przynależać. Do takich stowarzyszeń można zaliczyć Stowarzyszenie Harcerstwa Katolickiego „Zawisza” Federacja Skautingu Europejskiego (FSE). Jest to stowarzyszenie, które nawiązuje do tradycji skautowej liczącej ponad 100 lat i jest ruchem opartym na zasadach religii chrześcijańskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: wychowanie, dzieci i młodzież, skauting, stowarzyszenie „Zawisza”

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INTRODUCTION

The Association of Catholic Scouting “Zawisza” Federation of European Scouting was established in 1982. It is an educational movement following the decades-old tradition of European scouting and its Polish variation (“harcerstwo”) and build on the principles of the Christian religion. The Association employs the scout method participating in the great community of faith and common activity, i.e., the European Scouting (SSHKZ 2).

1. FOUNDATION OF THE FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN SCOUTING – A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

In order to gain a fuller insight into the character of the Association, it is necessary to look back at its sources. The Scout Method originates from the pedagogical intuition of an English Lieutenant General, Robert Stephenson Smith Baden-Powell. During his military service in India and South Africa, Lord Baden-Powell noticed that young soldiers, when they were encumbered with a high degree of responsibility but at the same time when they were trusted by their superiors, were capable of surprisingly positive behaviours. In 1899, Baden-Powell published a seminal book entitled *Aids to Scouting*, which was addressed to the British Army scouts. On his return to London, the general was surprised to find that his book became popular among young people not in any way associated with the army. The proposed model of upbringing rose interest among the youth who turned to him with numerous questions. Consequently, Lord R. Baden-Powell decided to devote more attention to this subject. In 1907, he gathered twenty boys of different social background on Brownsea Island and divided them into teams of seven called patrols. In each patrol, he chose one person to act as its leader. The outcome of this experience was a book entitled *Scouting for Boys* (Pilch 2003, 5). Sir Robert Baden-Powell said: “The motto of our times, both of the nation and of an individual, is as it seems: Selbst ueber alles - All down - me up” (Baden-Powell 1930, 16).

In Poland, the scouting movement owes its origin to Andrzej Małkowski, a student of the Polytechnic and University of Lviv, who one day in 1911 was late for classes of the Polish independence organization “Zarzew”. By way of punishment, he was ordered by the commander to translate *Scouting for Boys* into Polish. The translated book quickly became a bestseller, and the partitioned Poland was enriched with numerous scout troops. In 1913, representatives of Polish scouts participated in a rally of English scouts in Birmingham, presenting the flag of their homeland, which did not at that time exist on the political map of Europe. “This year they also take the [Polish] name *harcierz*, which means not only the first who undertakes the reconnaissance (scouting), but also the first to fight ([Polish] *harcownicy* i.e., skirmishers, or *harce* i.e., skirmishes before a battle). In 1918, after Poland regained its independence, the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association

(ZHP) was founded. The leading figures of Polish scouting were Fr. Kazimierz Lutosławski and Stanisław Sedlaczek, who was greatly influenced by the thoughts of Father Sevin and by the Catholic Scouting” (SHK 5).

The development of scouting was halted in 1948 by communist authorities, who began the process of ideologizing the scouting movement and subordinating it to its own assumptions (Kołodziej 2010, 9-18; Kwiek 1995, 123). During this period, the world scouting was also experiencing a crisis in the aftermath of World War II. The founders of the Federation of European Scouting aimed at renewing the fraternity among the warring nations in accordance with the adopted Christian principles. Unfortunately, many scouting organizations in the West began to depart from the main teaching of Lord Baden-Powell. In France, the wealth of Father Sevin’s thought was likewise abandoned. With the aim of returning to the origins and to the former principles, a French couple, Perig and Lizig Géraud-Keraod worked out a statute defining the essence, goals, and principles of the FSE, while Pierre-Yves Labbe and Jean-Charles de Coligny developed the movement’s pedagogy. After these changes, the Federation of European Scouting began to develop very rapidly in France and Italy. The activities and development of the FSE became easily recognizable. In 1975, on the occasion of the Holy Year, Pope Paul VI for the first time publicly expressed his great appreciation for the educational work of the Guides and Scouts of Europe (*Udienze 1975*).

2. EMERGENCE OF THE CATHOLIC SCOUTING IN POLAND – A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

The events of August 1980 brought in Poland a hope for a change for the better also to young members of the scouting organisation which has been operating in Poland as an educational social movement for nearly 100 years (SHK 3). Even the martial law failed to destroy these desires and aspirations. The Catholic scouting movement first established in February 1982, was in 1989 transformed into the Association of Catholic Scouting (SHK) “Zawisza” and registered in the Provincial Court in Lublin on April 10, 1990. The “Zawisza” Association, developed its own principles, goals and method of operation (DP 1999, 9). In 1995, “Zawisza” joined the European Scouting. This act made a reference to the pre-war efforts of Polish scouting and at the same time it was the culmination of the efforts initiated by Stanisław Sedlaczek and of his vision of the Catholic Scouting based on the achievements of Father Sevin. An important event for scouts from the “Zawisza” Association was their participation in 1994, in Eurojam, a great international rally of the FSE held in Italy. On August 3, 1994, 7,500 guides and scouts were received at an audience in St. Peter’s Basilica by the Holy Father John Paul II (SHK 7).

In a word addressed to the gathered youth, John Paul II said, among others: “Dear - Guides and Scouts of Europe! I am delighted to welcome you to this Wednesday general audience. During your International Jamboree in Viterbo, you undertake reflection on the theme: *In Christ, every man is my brother*. It is in this

context, that you set on a pilgrimage to the places sanctified by the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul, in order to strengthen your faith and undertake with animated zeal the mission that has been entrusted to you. Indeed, you are called to participate with the whole youthful enthusiasm in the construction of a Europe of nations where the dignity of a child loved by God would be respected in every human being and where a single community based on solidarity and brotherly love would be created. (...) The Scout Law is your ideal. It inspires you to develop the basic human values: honesty, integrity, conscientiousness in fulfilling your duties, love of nature, service to others. It consists in giving others what you get. It is through service to our neighbour that we find true happiness. The scouting pedagogy provides you with invaluable means for the formation of your personality. At your side there are superiors and adults who, by guiding you with determination and delicate patience, want to assist you in becoming better and better. (...) Dear young people, at the end of this general audience I cordially greet all of you coming here from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia and Switzerland. May your hearts never cease to desire to follow in the footsteps of Christ in the Church!" (Discorso 1994; DP 1999, 52-53). Currently, the SHK "Zawisza" FSE is developing the pedagogy of European Scouting, remaining faithful to the traditions of the pre-war Polish scouting (SSHKZ).

3. CHARACTER, GOALS AND METHODS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCOUTING "ZAWISZA" FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN SCOUTING

The Association conducts educational activities for the benefit of the general community. Those activities are focused on providing young people with means of personal development by practicing the traditional scouting method worked out by the founder of scouting, Robert Baden-Powell, and later developed by Jakub Sevin and the founders of Polish scouting. This goal is carried out based on the principles of the Roman Catholic religion and through the widest possible cooperation with young people from other European countries (SSHKZ). The Association promotes young people's development in the five following areas: "health and physical fitness, practical sense, character training, sense of service, religious life" (SHK 2).

The Association pursues its goals in particular through: "educational work in separate units for boys and girls, respecting their diverse needs and psychophysical abilities. It cooperates with parents of children and youth, conducts scouting activities throughout the year (assemblies, camps and events held in nature, activities promoting physical culture and sports) and organizes winter camps, summer camps and hiking. The Association units obtain funds for the purposes of statutory activities. It also organizes training camps and courses for the educational staff and conducts publishing and information activities. Members and participants of the Association are provided with uniforms, badges, publications, pedagogical

materials, and basic scout equipment. The Association organizes scientific sessions, exhibitions, cultural events, etc. (SHK 2).

An important educational element of the Association is the principle of "Education of the young by the young". Young people are responsible for one another by fulfilling specific tasks assigned to them in their patrol. The educational work in the Association is conducted based on the division into male and female activities with the aim of respecting the natural differences in the psychophysical development of girls and boys. Scouting has also adapted its educational method to the particular stages of a young person's development.

The first stage called *Wolf Cubs* is intended for children aged 8 to 12 and its motto is *Me and Others*. This stage draws on Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. Boys and girls are assigned to packs of six. Each child undergoes a short trial period, after which he or she becomes a cub and makes the Cub's Promise (*Prawo wilczka*). All tasks and responsibilities assigned to children in the pack are selected and formulated in such a way to help them overcome the tendency to selfishness and develop their interest in another person. The group counsellor is the *Old Wolf*, whose task is to observe the children entrusted to his or her care and to provide them with constant assistance such as advising them on their decisions, helping them to solve problems and overcome complexes, and above all, to steer them towards God. Each child has the task of gaining stars and skills, which are the outward manifestation of their progress. The patron and special advocate of the cubs is St. Francis, from whom children learn simplicity, poverty, and joy (SHK 3).

The second stage, called *Guides and Scouts*, is dedicated to children aged 12 to 17 and its motto is *Me with Others*. At this stage, the so-called patrol system is implemented in which each person experiences life in a small group of 6-8 people, under the leadership of one young person selected from this group. Each group member is moreover assigned a specific task for which he or she is responsible. Such a method develops in young people a sense of responsibility and teaches them the skill of exercising power in line with the competences typical of their age (*Karta skautingu europejskiego*). Patrols aim at integrating young people and enabling them to establish friendships. A group of friends is meant to provide support for each other and help all its members to overcome the difficulties they encounter. Education to such attitudes takes place through outdoor games, joint trips, and camps. It is during such activities that the formation of basic human virtues and the deepening and ordering of religious life takes place. Guides and scouts are obliged to give testimony with their attitude at school - through diligent study, as well as at home and in their families. Each guide and scout is bound by the scout oath: "On my honour, with God's grace, I promise to serve God, the Church, my homeland and Christian Europe with my whole life, to help my neighbour in every need, and to obey the Scout Law" (*Przyrzeczenie harcerek*).

All patrols have their leaders responsible for each of their charges. Moreover, each patrol has its own cook, who is responsible for preparing meals and for

collecting recipes; a topographer who prepares and reads maps and has orienteering skills; a treasurer in charge of the patrol's finances; a master of ceremonies and a quartermaster (SHK 3).

The third stage, *Rangers and Rovers* is intended for young people over 17 years of age and its motto is *Me for Others*. This stage means for the eldest entering the path of following Christ. For young people, it is the time to recognize their vocation and to serve others. The rangers, i.e., scout girls and rovers, scout boys, are grouped in teams of 6-8 members. The rangers form "fires", and the rovers "clans" (*Przewodniczki*). The rangers chose St. Teresa of Lisieux as their patron, while the patron saint of the rovers is St. Ignatius of Loyola (SHK 4). Fires and clans are places where young people inspire and enrich one another. Their formation is supervised by a priest as well as by the team superior. It is also a time when young people choose their spiritual leader who will help them make the right choices (SHK 19). The formation path of the rangers and rovers is divided into two stages. The first is called the stage of the *young road*, which in the case of the rangers ends with the ritual of the yellow Good Samaritan Trail, and in the case of the rovers - with the trail trial. The second stage of *active service* consists in young people's engagement in the work for the Association. Most often, this work involves taking charge of educating a specific group of children or youth undergoing formation in the Association.

The formation that both boys and girls undergo in the Association is meant to help them implement the learned principles and ways of conduct in their adult lives. Its goal is also to enable young people to begin their adult life in a responsible manner, prepare them to adopting specific attitudes and undertaking tasks in society, as well as to teach them how to face life's adversities. However, the most important goal of the formation is to prepare young people to understand and follow God's will in their lives.

At this point, it is worth clarifying the ways in which the training of the instructors' staff is performed in the Association. Young people aged 19-25 who intend to become instructors take part in in-depth personal formation for at least one year and take part in one or two training camps. The superiors of the Association participate in trainings abroad, while younger staff members are supported by older, more experienced instructors. The staff of the Association Superiors work solely on a voluntary basis (SHK 4).

Each association also has its own rules of conduct and the law which each member of that association is bound to adhere to. The basic principles of the European Scouting are as follows: 1) Scout duties start at home. 2) The scout is faithful to his homeland and works for unity and brotherhood in Europe. 3) The Scout - a son of Christianity - is proud of his faith: he works diligently to establish the Kingdom of Christ throughout his life and the world around him (SHK 4).

The Scout Law is a constant reminder to the members of the Association who they are and how they should act: the guide/scout cares about his or her honour

to earn the trust of other people. The guide/scout is loyal to his or her country, parents, superiors, and subordinates. The guide/scout is called to serve his or her neighbour and his or her salvation. The guide/scout is everyone's friend and brother or sister to another boy and girl scout. The guide/scout is polite and courteous. The guide/scout sees the work of God in nature, respects plants and animals. The guide/scout is disciplined, he or she carries out each task conscientiously to the end. The guide/scout is the master of himself or herself, smiles and sings when in trouble. The guide/scout is thrifty and cares about the welfare of others. The guide/scout is pure in thought, speech, and deeds (*Prawo harcerza*).

4. ACTIVITY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCOUTING "ZAWISZA" FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN SCOUTING

Each Association is characterized by a specific activity. The tasks and objectives set by the Association are assigned to individual months of the year. The first two months are the period of winter holidays and the time of when individual teams and groups set on trips to the mountains to experience unforgettable adventures and get to know each other during a variety of games and mountain hikes. February 22 is the *Day of Brotherly Thoughts*, commemorating the birthday of Lord Robert Stephenson Smith Baden-Powell. It is a worldwide celebration for all guides and scouts united in the Federation of European Scouting. Another common celebration is March 25, which is the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this day, each FSE community makes a pilgrimage to its local Marian shrine where the Holy Mass is celebrated for the entire FSE. This day is the *Day of Prayer for the FSE* (SHK 20).

In May, *May's Games* are organized every two years. In the gap year, all troops and packs organize individual several-day camping trips to spend time together. July is the time of summer camps for scouts and packs of wolf cubs, who travel to various places in Poland, and sometimes also abroad. The camps last from two to three weeks and are dedicated to games, study, rest, and prayer. August, in turn, is a month reserved for hikes of clan and fire leaders from each troop. At the end of the month, there are training courses for future leaders and training hikes for the current leaders of the rangers and rovers. September is the month of the new year of work, especially of scout work. On the penultimate weekend of this month, all rangers make a pilgrimage to Żarki (*Pielgrzymka wędrowników*), while on the last weekend, rovers set off on a pilgrim trail to the Benedictine Monastery Święty Krzyż (*Pielgrzymka wędrowników*).

Since its establishment in 2001, the Association has been a co-organizer of the Papal Day held in October by the Foundation Work of the New Millennium. Members of the "Zawisza" Association attempt to familiarize the public with the thought of St. John Paul II. On this day, guides and scouts also conduct a fundraising campaign under the slogan: "Let's share the love". The funds obtained in this way

are allocated to the Foundation's scholarship fund. The last two months of the year are devoted to distributing calendars, which are a contribution to the costs of daily activities of local troops and packs (SHK 20).

The main idea that inspired the founder of the European Scouting, Lord Baden-Powell, was to build peace and brotherhood among young people worldwide. The Guides and Scouts of Europe are also present in many European countries (*Wspólnota*) and in North America - Canada. The International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe is a federation of associations based on the same fundamental text, i.e., the FSE Statute (DP 1999, 34). They also work in the same spirit to serve the younger generation. Following this idea, the organization have developed a number of documents including, among others, the *Charter of the European Scouting*, which is to "set a common code of reference for all those who wish to found an actual and true scouting brotherhood worldwide" (DP 1999, 35). For "Scouting believes that each individual has his own immortal, personal and unique destiny, and therefore rejects any social philosophy leading to any «mass planning or collectivisation» that sacrifices the individual to society. Scouting intends to educate a man of faith, a son of the Church" (DP 1999, 35).

The FSE Association admits only children and young people or associations belonging to one of the following Churches: the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church. In other words, their members come from communities that profess the deity of Jesus Christ and recognize the Apostolic Creed (*Dyrektorium FSE*).

The community implements the idea of brotherhood both on the national and international level through joint camps of teams from different countries and through large international jamborees called *Eurojams* (SHK 21). These meetings teach young people openness to another person and to the world. In 2003, in Żelazko near Częstochowa, the "Zawisza" Association organized the first *Eurojam* in Poland. The international scout jamboree gathered 9,000 young people from all over Europe. Another event of an international scale was a great pilgrimage of rangers and rovers from all over Europe, *Euromoot*, held in 2007. Just as the Eurojam for guides (SSHKZ) and scouts in 2003, it was a time which provided young people of different nationalities with an opportunity to build mutual bonds. During this event, 5,000 people took part in the pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Our Lady at Jasna Góra in Częstochowa (SHK 21).

CONCLUSION

Since 1980, the Guides and Scouts of Europe have been recognized as a non-governmental organization with an advisory status in the Council of Europe (SHK 22). This article does not exhaust the topic but provides encouragement to explore it in greater detail. At the same time, the scarcity of source texts available in standard studies in Polish should be pointed out, most of the materials are available in the virtual space of the Internet.

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