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Archives of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association between 1956-1989.

Organisation, operation and resources.

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This dissertation attempts to showcase both the activities of the archives of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (Polish: *Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego, ZHP*) and the role they played in the scouting movement in Poland. Furthermore, I also focus on the process of establishing the archives of ZHP and discuss the characteristics of functioning of the said archives and offices since the foundation of ZHP. When speaking of the offices of ZHP, it is important to remember that their functions were overlapping with that of a secretariat as the consequence of the structural organisation of ZHP at that time. The detailed presentation of the development of archives and offices of ZHP is particularly important as it allows to answer a question concerning the similarities between the office structures of ZHP post-1956 and those of the interwar period.

The establishment of ZHP during the Congress of the Scouting and Guiding Activists in Łódź in December 1956 is still the subject of the dispute among the historians of Polish scouting movement. Some of the scholars claim that the Association founded during the Congress should be approached as a completely new and separate organisation while others see it as an act of its rebuilding or reactivation, due to the existence of legal continuity between the pre- and post-1956 Associations. However, in this dissertation I do not focus on the ongoing dispute and, therefore, terms ‘establishing’ ‘founding’ or ‘rebuilding’ are used by me interchangeably and synonymously. This is due to the fact that the main purpose of the dissertation is to solely show the differences and similarities between functioning offices and archives. Furthermore, I also attempt to discuss the problems faced by ZHP in different time periods. Henceforth, it is important to both establish the role offices and archives played in the organisational structure of ZHP as well as present the people not only directly responsible for the foundation of the said institutions but also those connected to them in professional or social capacity.

The discussion of the aforementioned issues required conducting the analysis of numerous documents, including handwritten as well as typed and printed ones. Additionally, the data included in the studied documents was also analysed comparatively – this method proved to be particularly useful as frequently the contents of different documents and information included in them very often contradicted each another. In order to ensure the accuracy of the conducted research, I was always looking for additional sources that would confirm historical facts discussed in the analysed documents. It is also worth highlighting that ZHP officials often used abbreviations and generalisation—for instance, when it comes to the names of organizational units—which made the full comprehension and understanding of the contents of the documents more difficult. Thankfully, knowledge and experience acquired during my days in ZHP proved to be invaluable for this research.

In my dissertation I referred to both previous studies and source texts and documents available in ZHP and national archives. The main body of source texts consisted of orders, acts and organizational documents from the National Archive of New Acts (Polish: *Archiwum Akt Nowych*, AAN) and the Museum of Scouting in Warsaw (Polish: *Muzeum Harcerstwa w Warszawie*, MH). In this thesis, I put greater emphasis on analysis of source texts and documents; this decision was motivated by the fact that, during literature review, I noticed that data in some of the existing studies either was historically inaccurate—and sometimes even incorrect—or misrepresented the facts.

When working with documents archived in AAN in Warsaw, I focused predominantly on the Collection 76 “Archive of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association” 1913-1939. The documents belonging to this collection were used by me to both describe the functioning of offices and archives of ZHP in the interwar period and characterise the organizational structure of ZHP during that period. The source texts which proved to be of particular importance for the conducted research focused on the activities of the activities of the Central Archive of Scouting and Guiding (Polish: *Centralne Archiwum Harcerskie*) and the Scouting and Guiding Film Archive (Polish: *Harcerskie Archiwum Filmowe*) in the 1930s; the minutes from the proceedings of the General Scouting and Guiding Council (Polish: *Naczelna Rada Harcerska*, NR ZHP) also proved to be essential.

Additionally, I also used documents pertaining to the ZHP activities during the communist period, namely those archived by AAN in the collection under archival supervision. In accordance with the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 19 February 1957 on the national archival resources, the archives of GK ZHP up to 1983 are the subject to the archival supervision; in the case of the aforementioned documents, AAN undertook the responsibility

of the said supervision. The collection in question contained documents discussing both the functioning of the central archive and the archival regulations implemented between 1956 and 1989. The discussion of the beginnings of ZHP and the documents created during that period included in this dissertation was also based on the materials edited by Tadeusz Strumiłła and kept in the Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

Due to the limited access to the archives of ZHP regions (Polish: *chorągwie*), one of the main sources of information concerning their functioning were documents created under the archival supervision between 1956 and 1983 and stored in the regional branches of the National Archives. Unfortunately, despite the statutory duty, not all regional branches of National Archives had been properly fulfilling their responsibilities and, even if they had, they did not produce any documentation of that period. During the query, there have been numerous instances when, among the archived visitation protocols provided by the archives, I have found other documents that proved to be within the scope of my research, such as office regulations, delivery acceptance certificates, correspondence between the archive and the District Command, or requests for missing non-archival documentation.

Another source of information about the functioning of the ZHP district archives were the archives themselves. During the process of collecting source materials, I have contacted all ZHP District Commands concerning the documentation on the archival activities in their possession. The majority of them did not reply to my request while some informed me that they did not possess any documents that would be of interest to me. I managed to establish a working relationship with only three of them: the Gdańsk District Command provided me with the list of archival materials in their possession; the Kuyavian-Pomeranian District Command had archival materials from 1956 to 1989 as well as delivery acceptance certificates and texts documenting the activities of its archive; finally, the archive of the Warmian-Masurian District Command was very open to cooperation and proved to be the most significant source of information. Firstly, I had the pleasure of interviewing Krystyna Chylińska nee Wiwatowska, an archivist who, starting from 1970, has been running the archive in Olsztyn. Furthermore, I had an opportunity to study the correspondence with the District Command as well as correspondence logs which were made available to me for the purpose of studying the development of the office management in the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association during the communist era. The materials archived by the Warmian-Masurian District Archive proved to be essential for the discussion of the functioning of district offices and archives as well as their activities.

Important documents, especially those devoted to the period between 1956 and 1989, were found in the Museum of Scouting. Materials archived in the Museum constituted the core of the reference section of this dissertation. During the conducted queries, I acquainted myself with documentation of the General Council of ZHP and the ZHP Headquarters, such as the minutes from meetings and reports from their activities. I also referred to documents created by different departments, such as the Organization Department, the International Department, the Scouting and Guiding History Research Team or the History Commission. Finally, I studied documents from two collections: “Acts of 1945-1949” and, for the time period 1950-1956, “Scouting and Guiding Association ZMP”. Collections containing documents on the functioning of the archive—such as delivery acceptance certificates and office and archive instructions implemented in 1969 and 1983—also proved to be invaluable.

In my research I also refer to numerous monographs, journals and other materials available in the Library of the Museum as well as in my own personal collection. Another very helpful source of information was www.archiwumharcerskie.pl, a website where documents, photographs are scouting press, dating back to the establishment of ZHP, have been digitalised and uploaded. Among those documents, I found *Wiadomości Urzędowe ZHP* to be of particular importance for my research. Additionally, I also referred to other websites, mostly to obtain photographic material. Due to the certain ‘instability’ of online materials, they could have been modified, changed and even deleted; hence, for the sake of this thesis, information presented of these websites were preserved in the form of printouts. The last type of resources employed in the process of writing this thesis was the legal acts issued by the Polish state.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the history of the scout movement in Poland up to 1989 from the socio-political perspective, with a particular focus on ZHP (the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association). Both social and political approval of the actions undertaken by the scout movement had a tremendous impact on its functioning from the very beginning as, without this support, the existence and development of the Association would not be possible. This is particularly true for the State and politicians who made numerous attempts to subdue ZHP; hence, building working relations with the political elites was unavoidable.

The second chapter describes the organizational structure of ZHP both on central and regional levels in a chronological order. The sheer number of organisational units as well as the frequent changes in the organizational structure of ZHP that occurred since its establishment made approaching this notion from a more subject-oriented perspective as some of the materials documenting those changes have been lost. Furthermore, I also attempted to discuss the place

of archives and offices within the structures of ZHP and show how the aforementioned changes affected them. The descriptions of some of the organisational units, especially those whose names do not immediately imply their role, also include their remit. In case of the ZHP Headquarters, I also tried to take into account the relationship between particular departments and the members of the central authorities of the Association. In the case of District Commands, I decided to present the functioning of these units on the few selected examples as, due to the volume of available materials, discussing every single one of them would constitute a subject of a new and separate study.

The third chapter is devoted to the characteristics of the main offices of the ZHP Headquarters and District Commands as they constitute an essential element in the process of creating and disseminating legal acts in all institutions, including ZHP. Hence, in order to present the development of the office management within the Association in a complex and comprehensive manner, the presentation of the role and place of the main office proved to be necessary. Furthermore, in this chapter I also discuss the evolution of the office and archival normatives, how they were implemented and how the main offices operated. Unfortunately, due to the limited access to personal data of the ZHP personnel, it was impossible to obtain information about the people employed by or connected to the main office, both in the ZHP Headquarters and in the District Commands.

In the fourth chapter I discuss the functioning and operating of the Archive of the ZHP Headquarters as well as present its history and the scope of archived resources. I also introduce the work plan and activity reports from different years and showcase the role the Archive played in the Association. The fifth and final chapter characterises the archives of District Commands, focusing on such aspects as their history, personnel, the scope of archived resources and the look and appearance of the buildings in which the archives are located. This chapter is of a particular importance as it demonstrates for the first time the types of source materials concerning the history of a particular ZHP District that can be found in the said archives. The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to disseminate information about said materials and, hopefully, to encourage historians of the scouting movement in Poland to take a closer look at them.

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