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NATIONAL-PATRIOTIC EDUCATION OF PLAST IN 1950'S — 1970'S: CASE STUDY OF AUSTRALIA

*Національно-патріотична освіта Пласту
в 1950-х — 1970-х рр.: на прикладі Австралії*

У статті досліджено засади та головні напрями національно-патріотичного виховання Пласт в Австралії. З'ясовано головні чинники його розроблення і впровадження, до яких віднесено загрозу асиміляції і денаціоналізації молоді генерации українців діаспори та старіння і відхід від справ першого покоління українських мігрантів. Проаналізовано дискурс української діаспори 1950-х років щодо цілей і завдань національно-патріотичного виховання молоді. Доведено, що акцент було зроблено на вихованні кадрового резерву борців за незалежність України, що обумовило орієнтацію виховної системи на майбутнє. Зроблено висновок, що Пласт Австралії зосередив головну увагу на фізичному та спортивному вихованні молоді, що мало гартувати як тіло, так і дух, в також виховувати достойних громадян світу і України; культурному аспекту виховання, зокрема участі у імпрезах, танцювальних та музичних колективах було приділено трохи менше уваги. Виявлено особливості виховної системи Пласт, зокрема врахування психологічних особливостей різних вікових груп дітей і молоді та організація занять у формі гри на природі. Головним інструментом впровадження виховної методики стало таборування. Для його розвитку Пласт Австралії створив низку таборів, на території яких також періодично проводились важливі культурні заходи української громади. Продемонстровано, що українці, які у дитячі та юнацькі роки були членами Пласт, мали активну

життєву позицію і зайняли в австралійському суспільстві достойне місце, зберігши при цьому національну ідентичність.

Ключові слова: національно-патріотичне виховання, українська діаспора, Австралія, Пласт, українська молодь.

The article explores the principles and main directions of national-patriotic education of Plast in Australia. The main factors of its development and implementation, which include the threat of assimilation and denationalization of the young generation of Ukrainians in the diaspora and aging of the first generation of Ukrainian migrants, which gradually moved away from socio-political activities, have been identified. The discourse of the Ukrainian diaspora in the 1950s on the goals and objectives of national-patriotic youth education has been analyzed. It has proved that it emphasized on the education of the reserve of fighters for independence of Ukraine, which determined the orientation of the educational system for the future. It is concluded that the Plast of Australia focused activities on the physical and sports education of young people, which had to temper both body and spirit, as well as worthy citizens of the world and Ukraine. The cultural aspect of education, including participation in performances, dance and music groups, received little attention. It was revealed the peculiarity Plast educational system, in particular the consideration of the psychological features of different age groups of children and youth and organization of lessons in the form of play in nature environment. It was found that the main tool for the introduction of educational methods was camp. For its development, Plast in Australia had set up a number of camps, which territory also used for organizing the important cultural events of the Ukrainian community. It has been demonstrated that Ukrainians, who were members of Plast in their childhood and adolescence, had an active life position and took a decent place in Australian society, while maintaining their national identity.

Keywords: national patriotic education, Ukrainian diaspora, Australia, Plast, Ukrainian youth.

Assimilation is one of the threats that all migrant communities face. As the first generations of migrants is aging, their level of participation in socio-political activities decrease, which actualize the need for creation of a specific system of education that would be able to support patriotism and the feeling of national identity of ethnic groups in new places of location. The experience of Ukrainian diaspora provides a good deal of data for analysis, since after World War II thousands of Ukrainian migrants were forced to resettle in Canada, the USA, Germany, Australia, and many other countries. The examination of this experience is vitally important for Ukraine given the increasing emigration and Russian aggression that put the task of consolidation of the Ukrainian nation on agenda.

The article aims to investigate the activities of Plast, which in the Cold War period was one of the most influential organizations of Ukrainian youth abroad and contributed to the theoretical development of the concept of national-patriotic education as well as its implementation in practice. Although the Plast organization operated in many countries and was especially popular in Canada and the USA, the case of Plast in Australia has been chosen to illustrate the key conclusions of our exploration. Everyday life and activities of the Ukrainian community in Australia have not yet been thoroughly studied, so there are a lot of white spots that need to be filled. Therefore, the task of this research is to analyze the formation and activities of Plast in Australia in the 1950s — 1970s and determine its contribution to the development of the national-patriotic education of Ukrainian youth.

Ukrainian historiography is quite limited. National-patriotic education is not considered as an integrated activity; researchers usually study its separate elements: Ukrainian schooling, saving of language and culture, family upbringing. Therefore, scientific literature on this problem is fragmented and limited. Besides, the main attention of researchers is focused on the Canadian diaspora. Majority of works on national and patriotic education relate to this country. For example, Y. Neduzhko connected activities of the diaspora in this field with the fight for the independence of Ukraine and proved that this was the main purpose of upbringing the young generation in 1945–1990 (Недужко, 2009). Т. Mikhailenko analyzed diaspora activities during this period from the perspective of pedagogical science (Михайленко, 2008). A lot of works devoted to military and patriotic education during the national liberation competition of 1917–1920 (L. Kriviziuk (Кривизюк, 2009), О. Dacenko (Даценко, 2002), etc.). Also noteworthy are the studies by I. Sribnyak on the national and patriotic education of Ukrainians in Polish prisoner-of-war camps after World War I (Срібняк, 2018).

As for Australia, very little research has been carried out in Ukraine, and this country remains terra incognita for local scientists. The only one field of interest in this context is Ukrainian schooling in Australia (V. Pavlenko (Павленко, 2009), Т. Slipetska (Сліпецька, 1998), I. Broznitsky (Брозицький, 1966)) and emerging and developing of Ukrainian studies in Australia (P. Guy-Nizhnik (Гай-Нижник, 2013)). As for Australian historiography, it is mainly represented by researchers of Ukrainian origin who belong to the second and third generations of migrants. They have written a number of works devoted to the everyday life of Ukrainian diaspora (Malecky, 1986); Ukrainian teaching (Марван, 1983); and Ukrainian studies in Australia (Павлишин, 2006–2007). They prepared also several encyclopedias on the Ukrainian community in Australia, which contain information about the activities of a church, community, cultural and artistic, educational, youth, women, cooperative, veteran, political, sports organizations, and the most prominent Ukrainians (Фундація Українознавчих Студій Австралії, 1994; НАН України, 1995; Товариство збереження української спадщини

в Австралії, 2001). However, this information is brief and has been prepared by the members of these organizations, which raises the question of its objectivity.

Regarding documents of Plast organization, it published a number of newspapers and magazines («Junak», «Plastovyi shliakh», «Hotuis» etc.), guidelines («Zhyttia v Plasti» etc.); its activities were highlighted by the diaspora press. However, these sources are located in the archives of those countries where groups of organization were active. This complicates the examination of the activities of the organization from Ukraine.

This analysis demonstrates the lack of research on the activities of the Ukrainian diaspora youth organizations in Australia particularly Plast and highlights examination of this aspect. This research is based on the analysis of the secondary literature, Plast press, and documents of Ukrainian archives, which make it possible to examine some guidelines of national-patriotic education in Plast ranks and their implementation in Australia after World War II.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the concept of national-patriotic education should be analyzed. However, there is no generally accepted definition of national-patriotic education in the studies of Ukrainian scientists. They are mainly focused on its components. I. Sribnyak views it through the prism of mobilization of certain groups in society (particularly militaries), which is realized through the network of cultural centers and publishing societies as well as the organization of forceful and athletic exercises (Срібняк, 2018). Although this applies to the period of the early twentieth century. M. Yenin indicates that in the early twenty-first century the values of mobilizing practices have changed and ethnonationalism has no longer play the dominant role as it was in the twentieth century. On his opinion, special emphasis on the military component of patriotic education, as well as the formation of a legal framework with an accent on military mobilization conflicts with the values of the modern world generated by globalization, democratization, informatization, and multiculturalism. This raises questions about the rethinking of models and means of national-patriotic education by the state, educational institutions, mass media, public organizations, and other social institutions (Єнін, 2018).

In our view, the definition of national-patriotic education is best defined in the state documents of Ukraine. In developed by Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine concept (2015) it determined as a set of measures aimed to develop high patriotic consciousness, a sense of loyalty and love for the Motherland, concern about its population, and readiness for the protection of its national interests, integrity, and independence¹. The national-patriotic educa-

¹ Наказ Міністерства освіти і науки України від 16 червня 2015 року N 641, 2015. Про затвердження Концепції національно-патріотичного виховання дітей і молоді, Заходів щодо реалізації Концепції національно-патріотичного виховання дітей і молоді та методичних рекомендацій щодо національно-патріотичного виховання у загальноосвітніх навч. [Online]. Available at: <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/MUS24863> [Дата звернення: 01.07.2020].

tion strategy for Ukrainian youth adopted in 2019 based on this concept determines that it's the most important priority is the formation of a valuable attitude of the person to the Ukrainian people, homeland, state, the nation (Президент України, 2019). Therefore, the activities of the Plast will be examined through the prism of this concept.

Plast was created in 1911 in Western Ukraine for the purpose of comprehensive, patriotic education and self-education of Ukrainian youth on the basis of Christian morality; its members actively participated in the building and defense of the Ukrainian state in 1920–1930s. Loyalty to Ukraine was symbolized in Plast emblem, where Scouting's Fleur-de-lis-flower of the lily was inseparably interlaced with Ukrainian Trident («*Tryzub*»). The organization revived after World War II in di-pi camps of Ukrainian prisoners in Germany and Austria. Despite the organization was a part of the scout movement, its activities included not only scouting, camping, sport but cultural education of youth Ukrainian background, which meant the formation of valuable attitude to the Motherland. Renewed Plast confirmed the initial goals of the organization. Ukraine was seen as a community settled on its `ancestors lands and abroad. However, given the resettlement of Ukrainians from di-pi camps around the world, the task of coordinating the activities of the youth of the new diaspora has arisen.

To demonstrate loyalty to Motherland members of the organization had to not only to harden the body but also study and use the Ukrainian language; study literature, history, geography and culture of the Ukrainian nation, Ukrainian heritage; know Ukrainian national symbols and anthem; cherish Ukrainian traditions, know and care about the Ukrainian society. To educate this loyalty Plast had developed complex measures.

The first members of Plast (*plastyni*) came to Australia in 1948 with the first wave of Ukrainian emigrants numbering about 20000 persons (Товариство збереження української спадщини в Австралії, 2001). They were mainly political emigrants who did not want to return to the Soviet Union. On their own initiative was formed the first circles of organization in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. *Senior Plast members located in Germany* appointed R. Olesnitsky the commissioner in Australia. He formed a Temporary Plast executive, which included E. Gurko, Ya. Andrukhovych and M. Shevchyk. Soon, Dr. E. Gurko, using the temporary guideline book, prepared the first statute agreed by Plast groups in America and Canada. It was approved at the 5th Regional Congress and finally approved by Melbourne Convention in 1951. Convention also elected Regional Representation of Plast seniors — Plast National Executives (*provid*) and approved guidelines for activities. In 1954, the main office of Plast moved to Sydney; M. Marenin was elected the head. By 1954, he completed the building of basic organization network, established communications between first groups, and started training of Plast tutors (Федусевич, 2017).

In Melbourne, the first Plast group (*oseredok* or *circle*)¹ emerged in 1949, in Adelaide and Sydney — in 1951, in Brisbane — in 1956, in Canberra — in the early 1960s. By 1958, different groups of Plast existed in all states except West Australia and Tasmania. In 1955, there were 419 members of Plast, in 1965 — 936, in 1879 — 689 (НАН України, 1995).

Already in the early 1950s, the Ukrainian diaspora started discussions about the purpose of youth national-patriotic education. One of its initiators was the World Congress of Free Ukrainians (WCFU). It contributed to the organizing of five pedagogical conferences in Canada in the late 1950s — early 1960s that developed the project of the Ukrainian Educational System and the ideal of young Ukrainian. Wide discussion took place during the 1st and 2nd Congresses of WCFU. The following main areas of national-patriotic education were identified: national, intellectual, religious-moral, social, and public. It was to be implemented through the following institutions: church, school, family, youth organizations, cultural and educational societies. According to the proposed vision, the ideal young Ukrainian born outside Ukraine was connected by historical links spiritually and ethnically with the country of his ancestors. He had to do all his best to maintain a strong Ukrainian national-ethnic substance outside Ukraine. He had to have the following features: love for the Ukrainian language and cultural heritage, respect for the national and personal dignity of other Ukrainians, Christian tolerance, ethical and moral values, respect, and tolerance for the country of new settlement (Світовий Конгрес Вільних Українців, 1986).

A similar discussion on the goals and methods of national-patriotic education took place on the pages of the Plast press. The main issue was the aim of Plast education. The answer to the question of what the organization should look for — past, present, or future influenced the development of educational methods. Most of the disputants believed that it should be directed towards the future because «our youth is our future»². Lida Palij on the pages of magazine «Plastovi shliakh» had written that the main goal of Plast education is to save Ukrainian children for Ukraine (Палій, 1950). Volodymyr Yaniv considered that Plast should perform two social functions: the upbringing of full-fledged citizens from young Ukrainian generation and providing the activities of its members for the benefit of society (Янів, 1950). Faithfulness to Ukraine was seen as a condition of preservation and further development of the Ukrainian spiritual state and as a precondition for its incarnation in the circle of free peoples of the world³. Zepa Palyiv believed that national education should be understood more broadly than the recitation at Taras Shevchenko's poems. On his view, it should have facilitated the consolidation of spiritual and physical values of a high degree that totally

¹ Oseredki and Circles united in *Stanica*.

² ЦДАЗУ. Ф. 29. Оп. 2. Спр. 1. С. 29.

³ ЦДАЗУ. Ф. 29. Оп. 2. Спр. 1. С. 20.

could reflect the high value of the Ukrainian community, creating the opportunity to fulfill its duties as political emigration (Паліїв, 1951). These and other similar statements allow us to conclude that the Ukrainian diaspora believed in the future independence of Ukraine and needed devoted fighters for the fulfillment of this goal. The main threat in this way was assimilation and denationalization.

The main elements of the Plast educational system were formed in the 1950s — 1970s. It consisted of three main elements. The first element — Plast idea: loyalty to highly-humane and common ideals to humankind — God, Fatherland, family, people that are close to plastyn and all humankind. The second element — the Plast education method that was realized through means of Plast education (wide, evolutionary action plan, adapted for all conditions). Given different age groups in Plast (Cub Scouts — age 6–12; Rover Scouts — 12–18, Older Plast members — 18–35 and Senior Plast members — those turned 35), means of education were developing for different target groups and support the idea of continuity. It corresponded also to each youth's interest and mentor's need, according to the circumstances. The third element — means of education, most popular of which are: weekly meetings, outings, excursions, walking tours, camps, games, meetings at the bonfire, etc., as well as mass meetings and competitions (sports and arts). They awoke the interests and passions of the youth and gave it needed life experience and practical skills.

Plast put the bet on two main directions of education in post-war Australia. First of all, it decided to develop a tradition of camping that had to evolve the strength and will of young Ukrainians and help them adapt to a new life in the new country. Considerable attention Plast paid also to the organizing of different events in the cultural life — performances, celebrating national Ukrainian holidays and historical dates. The peculiarity of a lifelong membership in the organization contributed to the continuity of educational traditions.

The camping originally took place in various regions of Australia, mainly in mountains, often on the banks of the rivers. In the late 1950s — early 1960, number of camps were founded: «Verkhovyna» (North Wales), «Sokil» (Victoria), «Chornomortsi» (South Australia), «Beskid» (Adelaida), «Khortica» (Brisbon) and many others. By 1958, there were eight camps.

While the first camps were located in leased territories, in the 1960s Plast acquired several parcels of land and equipped them especially for the camps. For example, one of the most popular «Beskyd» Campsite was built in 1966 on the bank of the river near Adelaida. It consisted of a house for participants of camps, basin, and house for group activities. In this building were celebrated different events of the Ukrainian community such as the 60th anniversary of Plast (1971–1972) and the 75th anniversary of Plast (1986–1987). In December 1988, meeting on the Millennium of Baptism of Ukraine-Rus took place here (НАН України, 1995). «Sokil», Ukrainian Youth Camp was built in a similar way. It consisted

of some houses, basins, a hall for meetings, Chapel of St. Yurii, sports grounds, a camp for parents (Sokolovka). In 1963, the first obelisk monument to Taras Shevchenko in Australia was erected there. Due to lack of money in the Ukrainian community, planning and development carried out mainly by the voluntary labor of Plast members and Friends of Plast (*Plastprijat*) (НАН України, 1995). In addition to creating over a dozen campsites, Plast members built or acquired over 30 facilities (*domivky*) where they could hold activities, generally every week.

What was the aim of education in the Plast camps? An analysis of the Olexandr Tysivsky book «Life in Plast» allows us to answer this question. He wrote that Plast educates children and young people, given the special mentality and customs of the Ukrainian people. Remembering and preserving the past, but looking and living for the sake of the future should become the motto of Plast. Its members were to develop the following fourteen traits: keeps his (her) word, be thorough, punctual, thrifty, just, courteous, brotherly and friendly, levelheaded, useful, diligent, always optimistic, obeys Plast leadership, care for his (her) health, beauty (Тисовський, 1997).

On the one hand, camps gave skills to survive in nature: understanding the terrain and navigating in the environment, learning of flora and fauna and the ability to deal with them, cultivating physical endurance and maintaining health. On the other hand, camps fostered self-education of body and spirit, upbringing character traits inherent to knights and a worthy citizen of their homeland and the world. In our opinion, the main messages of this approach were following: work for the good of your motherland and study well in school, because it was a duty to the motherland and work to other people; don't think about themselves, but think about your homeland and the good that their work should give to other people.

Pedagogical methods of Plast were implemented in the form of a game, which shows understanding the age-specific of young people. The organization developed special tasks for every target group that motivated children to fulfill them. They were acceptable to children. For example, history was presented to children in the form of fables, games, translations and illustrations. The senior members had to study Ukrainian history and traditions at home and discuss the most interesting issues at the meetings. Practical skills had to be fixed on nature (Палій, 1950).

The organizational structure of camps consisted of circles that united in larger groups («*kureni*»). Such a structure had to represent society in miniature. As Lesia Kuselivska-Tkach stated, one of the most important psychological features of a child is a sense of group and desire to belong to it (Киселівська-Ткач, 1953). Therefore, one of the main instruments of training was chosen the competition of both individuals and groups, which bring up a sense of unity and belonging to the community. This helped to the development of initiative, motivation and ambitions of youth. At the same time, competition formed the team that spent a lot of time together, participated in various holidays and vacations.

In our opinion, there are two factors to explain using of such a pedagogical approach. On the one hand, traveling, adventures, camping were the traditional forms of education from the very days of the organization. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning the words of Professor Grigorij Vashchenko, who considered that children of the post-war emigration had no childhood and were burdened with terrible experiences of the war. Therefore, the game form had to «return» their childhood, while performing the task of the right education.

It should be noted that Plast put important attention to the personality of mentors. It was believed that only the members of the organization can properly educate the younger generation of members. Two groups of elder Plast members — Older Plast members and Senior Plast members that have already turned 35 were playing the role of mentors and administrators in Plast. These factors indicate that Plast paid great attention to the physical fitness of young people. In addition, an important role in the forming of national-patriotic education played church and cultural life of the Ukrainian community. As Zepa Palyiv wrote, celebrations were an expression of what the Ukrainian community lives on (Паліїв, 1951).

Plastyni participated in a number of music and dance groups. There are some examples of people who were members of the organization in childhood and youth and actively participated in the activities of the Ukrainian community in Australia, including cultural life. Karen Anne Marie (Bachelor of Arch. (Science) Uni of Newcastle, Bachelor of Architecture Arch Uni of NSW), participated in the dance Ukrainian group and was a singer of the Ukrainian national ensemble named Volodymyr Ivasyuk. Karen Paul (doctor, graduated from Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, has degrees of M.B., B.S. (Syd.), B.Sc., (Med) (Syd.), FRACGP) was a singer of the Volodymyr Ivasyuk National Ensemble and bandurist of Gnat Hotkevich Ensemble. Irina Zaleska, one of the founders of Ukrainian professional theatre named Oles Kurbas in Victoria, speaker of the first Ukrainian radio-broadcasting program was the active member of Plast stanica in Victoria (kurin of A. Vojnarovsky). Zukiwskyj Anatolij, co-editor of «Free Thought» newspaper, a commentator on international and Australian events, co-editor of book «Almanach of Ukrainian Life in Australia», as well as «New Way» in Toronto and «Ukrainian Word» in Paris, author of numerous articles and abstracts, headed the Regional Plast Seniors, and for many years was Plast tutor (Товариство збереження української спадщини в Австралії, 2001).

Besides, Plast founded some music groups. The «Kalyna» Ukrainian Dance Ensemble originated in 1950 in Brisbane performed at all Ukrainian events and took part in many performances before the Australian public, in particular at the annual Heritage Festivals in Dalby, Queens. The most successful was its performance at the World Expo 88. The «Smerichki» Orchestra founded in 1983 consisted of eight Plast members. The leading performers were Markian Gutzalo and

Stepan Khomin. Group performed at many public concerts and national holidays, as well as accompanied for choirs and vocalists (НАН України, 1995).

Thus, the national-patriotic education of Plast in Australia in the 1950s — 1980s aimed at preparing a reserve of fighters for the independence of Ukraine. This was determined by the threat of denationalization and assimilation that mainly influenced young generations and threatened the existence of the Ukrainian community especially given the fact of aging the first generation of Ukrainian immigrants. Taking into account the peculiarity of the organization — belonging to the scout movement — the main methods of education were to temper the body and spirit, mainly through camping and sports. The cultural component — participation in various events of the Ukrainian community was less developed, although many members of Plast took part in choirs, dance and musical groups.

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