



Education for Ecological Awareness. Based on research of periodicals devoted to nature in the II Republic of Poland (1918-1939) on the example of a “Free Addition to natural sciences monthly for youths *Orli Lot* (*Eagle Flight*) devoted to the environmental protection issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection”

Wychowanie do świadomości ekologicznej. Z badań nad czasopiśmiennictwem przyrodniczym II Rzeczypospolitej (1918-1939) na przykładzie „Bezpłatnego Dodatku do miesięcznika krajoznawczego dla młodzieży *Orli Lot* poświęconego ochronie przyrody wydawanego nakładem Państwowej Rady Ochrony Przyrody”
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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to present the subject of education for ecological awareness on the example of a “Free Addition to natural sciences monthly for youths ORLI LOT [*Eagle Flight*] devoted to environmental protection, issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection”. The structure of this article is based on chronology and issue analysis. It is made of three parts: paper devoted to environmental protection, care about establishing school circles of League for Nature Conservation, activity of youths sightseeing societies in the scope of environmental protection and education for ecological awareness.

Keywords: II Republic of Poland (1918-1939), history of education, ecological awareness, education, mass media

Abstrakt: Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie tematyki wychowania pośredniego do świadomości ekologicznej na przykładzie „Bezpłatnego Dodatku do miesięcznika krajoznawczego dla młodzieży ORLI LOT poświęconego ochronie przyrody wydawanego nakładem Państwowej Rady Ochrony Przyrody”. Artykuł ma strukturę chronologiczną i rzeczową/problemową. Składa się z trzech części: artykuły o tematyce ochrony przyrody, w trosce o zakładanie szkolnych kół Ligi Ochrony Przyrody, działalność kół krajoznawczych młodzieży w zakresie ochrony przyrody i wychowania do świadomości ekologicznej.

Słowa kluczowe: II Rzeczypospolita (1918-1939), historia edukacji, świadomość ekologiczna, wychowanie, mass media

Introduction

The Polish Sightseeing Society as a community of persons interested in sightseeing was formed in Warsaw in 1906. It organized trips and speeches, it dealt with environmental protection, it had regional museum shows and from 1910 it published a monthly

“Ziemia” [*The Earth*] and a periodical “Orli Lot” [*Eagle Flight*] from 1920. When in Spring 1920 there was an initiative to publish the “Orli Lot” - a Sightseeing Monthly of the Youths Sightseeing Circles of the Polish Sightseeing Society¹ (full title) edited by

1 Subtitle: Sightseeing monthly; entity of the PTK youths sightseeing societies. Second subtitle: Entity of youths sightseeing circles of the Polish Sightseeing Society.

Leopold Węgrzynowicz, the following message to young people was given in the first issue: “we wish to light (...) the sparkle of love of the fatherland” („Orli Lot” 1920/1-2, p. 1), which was also reminded to the youths on the tenth anniversary of the periodical” (compare “Orli Lot” 1930/1, p. 2).

The periodical was issued in the years 1920–1950². In the annuals: 11 and 12 (for the years 1930–1931) five free inserts were included: Additions to the monthly devoted to the subject of environmental protection (issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection). Articles on environmental protection were published in them³, information on the activity of the League for Nature Conservation⁴ and activity in the field of environmental protection of the youths sightseeing circles⁵. Environmental reserves were also discussed therein⁶, educational shows (Czarnowski, 1931/2, p. 6-7), spreading the idea of environmental protection in the annual entitled “Environmental Protection” (Niemcówna, 1930/1, p. 3; Niemcówna, 1931/1, p. 3). Young people were encouraged to participate in gathering news on monumental trees and glacial erratic’s (Głowińska, 1931/1, p. 2-3). There was information on the activity of nature lovers societies (Kochanowski, 1930/2, p. 3-4), new publications in the field of environmental protection, for exam-

ple J. J. Karpiński’s. *Białowieża Wilderness and the Białowieża National Park*, Krakow 1930) (*Nowe wydawnictwa...*, 1931/2, p. 8) and devoted to the subject of a proper organization of trips for school youths, which serve the education for ecological attitudes (*Sources...*, 1930/3, p. 3-4). What is more, in the Addition to the sightseeing monthly there was a list of Sightseeing Circles of the League of Nature Conservation Youths Societies Union (as of 2 July 1930, generally 15) (“Free Addition...”, 1930/3, p. 4).

1. Articles devoted to the issues of environmental protection

In the Addition to the sightseeing monthly several works were published by a botanist, Władysław Szafer, the Jagiellonian University professor, who is the author of numerous scientific publications devoted to the issue of environmental protection. Władysław Szafer added to the formation (compare Szafer, 1969, p. 5) of a Temporary Commission of Environmental Protection in 1919 by the Ministry of Religions and Public Enlightenment⁷ which was transformed into the National Council of Environmental Protection in 1925. It is also worth mentioning that in the period of II Republic of Poland Władysław Szafer (from 1920)

2 Since 1924 the editor-in-chief was Tadeusz Kiełpiński, and in 1938 Tadeusz Seweryn took over. The address of the editing house: Section of Sightseeing Circles of the Polish Sightseeing Society.

3 Władysław Szafer’s articles were published, entitled: *Wisent comeback to the Białowieża Wilderness, Pieniny - the treasure of the Polish nature, Forest Reserve of Władysława Orkan in Gorce*; by Stanisława Niemcówna entitled “*Environmental Protection*” *Entity of the National Council of Environmental Protection*; Walery Goetel’s piece entitled: *Crystal cave in Wieliczka*; Klaudyna Chylińska’s work entitled. *Stefan Żeromski’s commemoration*; January Kołodziejczyk’s entitled *Nowogród Świtez*.

4 The League of Nature Conservation was discussed in: “Free addition to the Sightseeing Monthly “Eagle Flight” dedicated to environmental protection, issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection” No. 1 of March 1930, p. 2.

5 The activity of youths’ sightseeing circles in the field of environmental protection was described in: “Free addition to the Sightseeing Monthly “Eagle Flight” dedicated to environmental protection, issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection” No. 1 of March 1930, p. 23.

6 An example may be Władysław Szafer’s work entitled *Forest reserve of Władysława Orkan in Gorce*, published in: “Free addition to the Sightseeing Monthly “Eagle Flight” dedicated to environmental protection, issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection” No. 2 of June 1932, p. 5.

7 In the Decree on caring for the monuments the art and culture of 1918 announced that care for the monuments (of culture, nature) was the responsibility of the Ministry of Religions and Public Enlightenment. Therefore the Ministry issued dispositions concerning environmental protection, list of monuments and a prohibition of moving them out of Poland, organizing the National Museum of Nature (after a name change: the Polish National Museum of Nature) and introducing an obligatory holiday of trees planting in schools (in relation with patriotic education of youths and children). In a Law of 10 March 1934 on environmental protection (which was co-formed by the members of the National Environmental Protection Council) it was announced that the management and supervision over the completion of environmental protection in the Republic of Poland would be the of the Ministry of Religions and Public Enlightenment and the authorities of general administration were the nature conservationists appointed by the Minister of RPE (with the Minister of Agriculture and Agricultural Reforms). It should be added that the Ministry of Religions and Public Enlightenment, in the area of environmental protection, cooperated not only with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Reforms, but also with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Treasury, Foreign Affairs Ministry, Military Affairs Ministry, Communication Ministry, Social Care Ministry. Compare Wolter E., *Edukacja ekologiczna w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University Editing House Warsaw 2013, p. 437.

was a member of the Polish Skills Academy. In the years 1925-1937 he was a delegate of the Minister of Religions and Public Enlightenment for Environmental Protection (the position corresponding to a further position of Nature Conservationist). He chaired the National Council of Environmental Protection, which was the advisory body of the Minister of Religions and Public Enlightenment. As the NCEP chairman he also participated in summoning (in 1928) the League of Nature Conservation. In the years 1936-1938 he was the rector of the Jagiellonian University. Władysław Szafer's great achievements in the area of environmental protection should be emphasized. Thanks to his involvement in chapter 10 (article 99) of the Law of March 17, 1921 of the Polish Constitution there was an entry on permitting a limitation of ownership in the scope of a free use of land, waters, minerals and other treasures of nature. On professor Szafer's initiative several dispositions of the President of the Republic of Poland were announced to protect, among others: mountain pine, wisent, beaver, groundhog, black stork, forest areas and game, and in 1921 a nature reserve was organized in the Białowieża Wilderness (compare Pieczyńska, Spodniewska, 1979, p. 12).

Władysław Szafer in the article entitled *Wisent comeback to the Białowieża Wilderness* wrote that the last wisent died in the Białowieża Wilderness because of hunger and local poachers (Szafer, 1930/1, p. 1). He reminded that wisent (*Bison europaeus*) was protected in Poland already in the Middle Ages and hunting for them was reserved only for the Polish kings. Wisent became the symbol of Białowieża Wilderness, it was even called the royal game. To rescue the special animal against total extinction, the Polish government managed to buy several wisent. In effect of this effort, on September 19, 1929, two wisent were brought to the Białowieża Wilderness and on October 10, 1929 two next wisent (females). Władysław Szafer signaled that there were plans to bring two more wisent and in this way, as he put it, the "Royal Wilderness regained its whole majesty" (ibidem, p. 2).

The Addition printed also an article entitled *Pieniny – the treasure of the Polish nature*, in which Władysław Szafer described the beauty of the Pieniny

landscape and he emphasized that the magic of the landscape inspired many poets, such as Wincenty Pol, Adam Asnyk, Maria Konopnicka (compare Szafer, 1930/2, p. 1). He emphasized that the variety of flora in Pieniny corresponds to the variety of fauna. The permanent dwellers of that area are: badger, pine marten, weasel and among rodents, the dormouse is particularly interesting. In unavailable caves and dark rock cracks there are bunches of rare bats and owls (eagle owl too) (compare ibidem, p. 2). Władysław Szafer explained that in 1929 the Polish government bought from private owners the most beautiful part of Pieniny with their highest mountain top: Trzy Korony (Three Crowns) in order to protect the specific treasure of nature in Pieniny and to prevent any destructions there. In this way "that wonderful part of the Polish land gained an always untouchable reserve (...) the Polish youths, during trips, will be able to enjoy the beauty of magnificent, well maintained nature" (ibidem, p. 3). Whereas in the article entitled: *Forest reserve of Władysław Orkan in Gorce* Władysław Szafer not only described the beauty of nature in Gorce, but he also explained the meaning of the idea of environmental protection in the process of Polish youths education (Szafer, 1931/2, p. 5-6).

Walery Goetel - geologist, traveler, environmental protection activist, professor (since 1920) of the Mining Academy in Krakow, in the article entitled *Crystal Cave in Wieliczka* described the salt mine in Wieliczka, original beauty of huge crystals of pure Wieliczka salt, which are admired in numerous museums all over the world (among others in the British Museum in London and the National Museum in Vienna). The most beautiful group of crystals was put in the Minerals Faculty of the Jagiellonian University (Goetel, 1930/3, p. 1). Walery Goetel emphasized that during the search of crystals in the Wieliczka mine a group of especially wonderful crystals was found (before the war), covering the walls of a bigger chamber (crystal cave). Thanks to the efforts of the National Council of Environmental Protection and many Polish scientists and nature lovers, a reserve was established: "The Polish Government, who is the owner of the mine in Wieliczka, agreed to change that crystal cave into an untouchable reserve. It is a special reserve, because it is underground, in the mine, the

first one of this type in Poland and one of very few in the world (...) miracle of Poland's still nature, crystal cave in Wieliczka" (Goetel, 1930/3, p. 1-2).

January Kołodziejczyk (author of works devoted to environmental protection) in an article entitled *Świtez nowogródzka* he described a landscape of the Świtez Lake near Nowogródek (also known thanks to a famous ballad *Świtezianka* by Adam Mickiewicz). Kołodziejczyk emphasized that the plants in the Świtez lake are dying out and "the lake in effect of this has a significant meaning for the problems of plants geography (...) keeping one of the most interesting and the most beautiful lakes in Europe in the form of a nature park is one of the postulates of protection issues in Poland" (Kołodziejczyk, 1931/1, p. 2).

Whereas Stanisława Niemcówna was an advocate of ecological and educational activity in the sightseeing circles. She wrote about the obligation to take care about birds, she recommended to youths and children to keep notes with information on plants, park stands and city gardens and reading the printed publications in the "Environmental Protection" annual issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection. She stated that the annual should (completely) be in the library of every Youths Sightseeing Circle, because "thanks to this publication we can get acquainted precisely with such monumental environment in the Polish land, which deserves special attention thanks to its inherent nature. What is more we inform how people work in the scope of environmental protection in other countries" (Niemcówna, 1930/1, p. 3). She wrote that it was very precious that protected areas were recognized by sightseers wanderers, because it adds both to the development and popularizing the idea of environmental protection as well as the development of active ecological attitudes.

According to Stanisława Niemcówna "inhaling the idea of environmental protection by young sightseers is the need of the moment, even stronger than so many mistakes were made in the past when in various fields of nature so much wealth was stolen" (ibidem). Since the sightseeing circles deal with recognizing the country in direct contact, also with the nature of the fatherland, that is why in her opinion it is a must to know the subject of environmental

protection and discuss its particular areas during walks, among others in the Tatras, the Pieniny and in the Beskidy Mountains. It is also necessary to set up sections of environmental protection lovers and to discuss the purposes of environmental protection at the meetings of particular units, to get acquainted with the status of environmental protection in Poland (in particular the protected areas in the local environment), comparison of the status of protection in Poland and in other countries (compare ibidem, p. 3-4). Stanisława Niemcówna, when she emphasized the immense meaning of the idea and practical activity in the scope of environmental protection recommended the following articles to the members of sightseeing circles: by prof. Władysław Szafer, prof. Adam Wodziczko (also printed in the annual entitled "Environmental Protection") (compare Niemcówna, 1931/1, p. 3). She emphasized that in Poland the idea of environmental protection becomes particularly important due to "war devastations" (ibidem p. 4) and post war devastations.

2. Efforts to establish school circles of League of Nature Conservation

The League of Nature Conservation was established on the initiative of the National Council of Environmental Protection. In the area of Pomorze and Wielkopolska the League of Nature Conservation functioned from 1925 already, but on January 9, 1928 there was the first convention of the society of higher public utility, general national organization. In the first years of its activity the League of Nature Conservation dealt with buying out land for future protected areas (compare Simondes, 2008, p. 340). Private persons and institutions were the members of the League. The purpose of the League of Nature Conservation, first of all, was to popularize environmental protection, to promote harmonious relations with nature among common school students, but also among scouts.

In the "Free Addition to the Sightseeing Monthly for Youths - the Eagle Flight - devoted to the environmental protection issued by the National Council

of Environmental Protection” it was written that the League of Nature Conservation had its headquarters in Warsaw (al. Ujazdowskie 6-8), and its branches are in several bigger cities in Poland. It is a social organization, which popularizes the idea of environmental protection among the Polish society, especially school youths (compare *Liga Ochrony Przyrody*, 1930/1, p. 2). The already existing societies and school youths unions may enter the League of Nature Conservation and then they should pay thirty groszs a year for its purposes (every member of the society enrolling to the League). The readers were explained that the League of Nature Conservation also organized its own branches and circles based on the statute, which it sends to persons interested in this document. The editors of the discussed Addition emphasized the educational value of the activity of the League of Nature Conservation, because it “connects the Polish children with their land (...) and that the League of Nature Conservation should be in every Polish school. Organize the League circles and enroll as its members” (ibidem).

3. Activity of youths sightseeing circles in the scope of environmental protection and education for ecological awareness

One of the most important tasks of the youths sightseeing circles was environmental protection. The circles regulations contained a provision that their purpose was to care about the monuments of nature and culture. The issue of environmental protection was always accounted for at the conventions, even that the youths sightseeing circles should belong to the League of Nature Conservation (compare *Koła krajoznawcze...*, 1930/1, p. 2). It may be added that the members of sightseeing circles prepared reports of their activity. The following may serve as examples: numbers from 1929, which meant that among 98 only 30 circles proved that they were interested in environmental protection, and only 16 of them belonged to the League of Nature Conservation. They were circles operating in the Female Seminar in

Bochnia, Female High School of Blessed Jolanta in Gniezno, Male Seminar in Łowicz, Female Seminar of Benedictines in Przemyśl, Female Seminar and Male High School in Sandomierz, Male Seminar in Sennica (compare ibidem). It was stated in the report that the following schools also worked on a partial development of the idea of environmental protection: Male Seminar in Czarnków, Female Seminar in Krakow, Male Seminar in Leszno, II Female Seminar in Tarnów, Male Seminar in Chrzanów, Male High School in Rogoźno, Male High School and Female High School in Tłumacz, Senior High School in Krzemieniec, Common School in Piaski Luterskie, Common School No. 3 and No. 5 in Włocławek (compare ibidem p. 3).

A piece of a report of the Youths Sightseeing Circles at the Female Seminar in Sandomierz, as a positive example of activity, was cited in the analyzed periodical. The report had it that the Circle enlisted to the League of Nature Conservation and every of its members paid the annual fee in the amount of 30 groszs. The readers were also informed that two delegates of the circle were sent to the Convention of the League of Nature Conservation, which was held on February 2-3, 1929 in Warsaw. What is more, there was a public reading in the school devoted to the issue of environmental protection and the members of the circle regularly read texts of the National Council of Environmental Protection (available in the school library), and they also gather food for birds, they build bird houses for them (compare: ibidem), which constitutes an implication of the process of shaping ecological attitudes among young people.

In the analyzed Addition to the sightseeing monthly it was written that on the initiative of the National Council of Environmental Protection of the Commission of Sightseeing Circles of School Youths on: 26 April - 16 May 1931 an exhibition was organized in Krakow devoted to environmental protection (compare Czarnecki, 1931/2, p. 6). A grand opening of the exhibition was made by the Chairman of the National Council of Environmental Protection and the Delegate of the Minister of Religions and Public Enlightenment, professor Władysław Szafer, who said in the speech about the meaning of environmental protection, he appealed

to young people not to destroy nature, especially its most precious monuments. PhD Tadeusz Seweryn, president of the Circle of Krakow Sightseeing Circles Society also participated in the exhibition opening (compare *ibidem*, p. 7).

There were also texts about the activity of the Circle of Nature Lovers, which acted from 1921 in the national high school of Adam Mickiewicz in Grodno. The circle gathered students of all classes (54 members in 1929), the meetings were held twice a month in the school garden or outdoors, in the nature. During the meetings, the members discussed the matters of nature protection, especially how to care about birds, how to feed them in winter, how to build bird houses for them and how to prepare nests. In the autumn the members planted trees and bushes and then they took care of them. One of the students (IV grade) gave a speech entitled *Let us protect our nature* (compare Kochanowski, 1930/2, p. 3).

Members of the Geographical Circle in the National Female High School of Blessed Kinga in Kielce (which was formed in 1928) besides knowing the fatherland, the monuments, also worked on environmental protection. On May 24, 1930 the Geographic Circle celebrated uncovering of a monumental stone (compare Chylińska, 1930/2, p. 3), exhibited on their own cost in the outskirts of the fir wilderness, on the way leading to Łysica. During the celebrations there were talks about Stefan Żeromski, who, "in his 'Fir Wilderness' announces that lumberjacks will come to cut those saint trees, which lived so many years and have seen so many things" (*ibidem*, p. 2-3).

Besides, in the discussed Addition there were appeals to young people so that they gather information about monumental trees in Poland. It was justified that materials may be used by the National Council of Environmental Protection⁸, which intends to issue an illustrated *Polish Trees Memoir* like similar publications in other countries. It was recommended to obtain information from foresters or other persons, who know well the area of the vacation stay, in particular big and beautiful specimen of trees in the

park, in the forests, nearby roads. Young people were encouraged to describe every monumental tree, based on the following categories: the Polish name of the tree, address of the tree owner, exact measurements (height, diameter on the level of 1,5 meter from the ground, trunk diameter measured on the ground), an approximate age of the tree, analysis if the tree is healthy, if it has hollows, how big and whether they are empty or filled in. It was recommended to obtain information if the tree is at risk of being cut and what is the level of its security. And also, whether a cross or a shrine is hanged on it, is there a legend related with it. The youths were motivated to make efforts to gain a photograph or to draw it with a pencil (W. S., *Zbierajcie...*, 1930/2, p. 1). There was also a text on the need to gather information on glacial erratics. It was explained that especially big blocks should be protected, those with special shape, material quality, specific value as a monument of nature or a monument of special events, or as boundary stones (Głowińska, 1931/1, p. 2).

Conclusion

The Ministry of Religions and Public Enlightenment recommended for school use many periodicals, among which there was the "Eagle Flight", because knowledge on geography, nature and culture was popularized in this periodical, especially in the scope of sightseeing trips⁹. It should be emphasized that "Free addition to the Sightseeing Monthly "Eagle Flight" dedicated to environmental protection, issued by the National Council of Environmental Protection" fulfilled the educational and informative function. It served to educate for ecological attitudes in the process of ecological education in common schools and high schools in the Second Republic of Poland, which was then strictly connected with the idea of environmental protection and it was realized during classes on nature, biology and geography. The youths were explained on the consequences of

⁸ Address: ul. Lubicz 46, Krakow/Kraków.

⁹ Compare New Files Archive in Warsaw. Files: Ministry of Religions and Public Enlightenment Organizational unit: II Department of General Education, Upbringing Section. Circulars, personal composition End dates: 1931 -1939, file No. 219 (microfilm number: B-9214), p. 28-29.

killing animals (for profits, for furs). Attitudes of respect were developed towards birds, especially the ones, which eliminate destructive insects. Students of general schools were educated not to be cruel for animals and not to torment them. Active ecological attitudes were shaped and students were taught how to care about animals, feed them in winter, build bird houses and boxes for bird nests. The students learned about natural rights of nature (birds wandering), organisms in their natural habitat, thanks to which they were able to understand the connection of the construction of particular beings with their ways of

life. They were also taught about the meaning of pure air and drinkable water for human life. They were explained the meaning of natural treasures, among others, mineral healing waters, original forests for natural environment and bio-geographical landscape in the area of the Second Republic of Poland, such as: the Tatra Mountains with Podhale, Świętokrzyskie Mountains, Wieliczka. They learned about original wilderness in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, Polesie, Podlasie, Vilnius areas and the scope of protection of animals at the risk of extinction such as wisent, beaver, elk.

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