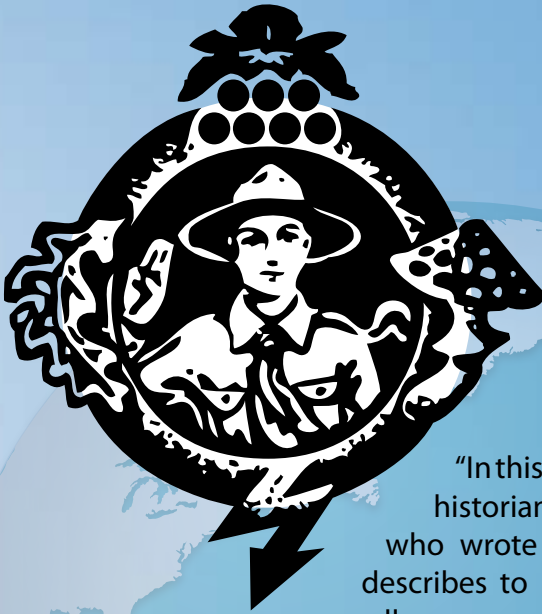




# PLAST

**Ukrainian Scouting  
A Unique Story**



“In this book, the renowned historian Orest Subtely, who wrote *Ukraine: A History* describes to us how, in 1911, a small group of teachers, whose people lived under foreign rule, at the crossroads of empires, took Baden Powell’s idea, adapted it to their circumstances and formed a scouting organization for the betterment of Ukrainian youth and to provide hope to the Ukrainian nation. The organization was buffeted by history — repression, war, emigration, dispersement throughout the world — and finally found renewal in a free Ukraine. It was an amazing journey, truly a unique story.”

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Plast scouts at Camp Sokil in the 1920s.





## The Plast Law

*A Plast scout is always:*

1. Dependable
2. Conscientious
3. Punctual
4. Thrifty & efficient
5. Fair
6. Courteous
7. Friendly and kind
8. Calm
9. Productive
10. Obedient to scout leadership
11. Diligent
12. Attentive to his or her own health
13. Appreciative and caring about beauty
14. Cheerful



Official opening in Lviv of the International Plast Jamboree, 2012, commemorating 100 years of Plast.



*Plast: Ukrainian Scouting, a Unique Story*



*This English edition of the unique story of Plast is proudly dedicated to the select few men and women in Ukraine who had the vision and drive to develop young minds, and to nourish their spirit and love of their country and its people. The scouting ideals propagated by them spread from generation to generation, and are still alive today.*

Plast Publishing Inc.

# Plast

## Ukrainian Scouting, a Unique Story

by

**Orest Subtelny**

with

Orest Dzulynsky  
Tanya Dzulynsky and  
Oksana Zakydalsky

Toronto

2016

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**Plast Ukrainian Scouting Organization, Plast Publishing Inc.**

***Plast: Ukrainian Scouting, a Unique Story***

by Orest Subtelny

with Orest Dzulynsky, Tanya Dzulynsky, and Oksana Zakydalsky

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# Preface

## About the book

The idea of writing a history of Plast was planned for many years and by many Plast scout-senior members. Finally, Professor Orest Subtelny, himself a member of Plast, was engaged to edit such a history on the basis of material collected from various sources, from different countries. The slow process of collecting these materials prompted him to begin researching and writing the history himself. Unfortunately, he could not finish it because of health problems, and did not live to see the published result.

The Coordinating Committee under the Supreme Plast Executive (HPB) felt that the work done by Subtelny should not be abandoned. The members did their best to complete his story of Plast, revising some and authoring other chapters. It is now being published in English. Hopefully, the Ukrainian version of the work initiated by Orest Subtelny will be completed by other historians in the near future.



*Book Coordinating Committee, L to R: Tanya Dzulynsky, Bohdan Kolos, Oksana Zakydalsky, Orest Dzulynsky (chair from 2006), and Myron Babiuk; inset: Mykola Junyk (chair until 2006).*



*Orest Subtelny (1941–2016).*

## About the main author

Orest Subtelny was a professor of history and political science at York University, Toronto, and a noted expert on Ukraine's Mazepa era. Among Subtelny's prominent works is *Ukrainians in North America: An Illustrated History* (University of Toronto Press 1991). His best-known work, however, is *Ukraine: A History* (English vol. in 4 editions, 1988–2009; Ukrainian translation, 1991).

### From Google Books:

In 1988, the first edition of Orest Subtelny's *Ukraine: A History* was published to international acclaim, as the definitive history of what was at that time a republic in the USSR. In the years since, the world has seen the dismantling of the Soviet bloc and the restoration of Ukraine's independence—an event celebrated around the world but which also heralded a time of tumultuous change for those in the homeland.

While previous updates of the book brought readers up to the year 2000, this new fourth edition includes an overview of Ukraine's most recent history, focusing on the dramatic political, socioeconomic, and cultural changes that occurred during the Kuchma and Yushchenko presidencies. It analyzes political developments—particularly the so-called Orange Revolution—and the institutional growth of the new state. Subtelny examines Ukraine's entry into the era of globalization, looking at social and economic transformations, regional, ideological, and linguistic tensions, and describes the myriad challenges currently facing the Ukrainian state and society.

# Foreword

## A unique story

*Orest Dzulynsky*

The Ukrainian Scouting Organization Plast was founded in 1912 in Lviv. This, the largest city in Galicia and a provincial seat in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was inhabited by Poles, Ukrainians, and other minorities. The friction between the two major nationalities, Poles and Ukrainians, created a hostile environment for the fledgling Plast organization. After WWI, Galicia became a part of Poland, and the discrimination towards Ukrainians intensified. Plast activities were barely tolerated, and then completely banned in 1930.

After the official dissolution of Plast by the occupying Polish authorities in 1930, the Plast movement in Galicia was forced to continue its existence “underground.” It engaged in scouting activities under different organizational names until the beginning of WWII in 1939, and then under the Soviet (1939–41) and German (1941–45) occupations.

The hostile environment in their country forced many Ukrainians, among them patriots who “grew up” in Plast, to emigrate to various countries in Europe, and subsequently to North and South America. As rover-rank scouts and scout-seniors, these were leaders who continued to carry the ideals of Plast wherever they happened to be: Czechoslovakia and Transcarpathia in the 1930s, Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Germany and Austria after WWII, and finally in the countries where Plast exists to this day: USA, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Britain, Germany, Poland, and Slovakia.

These same people and their descendants—the leaders of Diaspora Plast—were ultimately the catalysts in promoting the rebirth of Plast in Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990. After 78 years of peregrination, Plast was again established in its country of origin, on Ukrainian land—now a free and independent state.

One would think that the tribulations were finally conquered: being in its own country, with evidence of growth and stability, Plast could justifiably expect to join the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). However, as throughout its history, political interference in various ways obstructed the development of Plast. Nevertheless, Plast survived and flourished, recently celebrating its centenary in the many countries where it exists as well as its homeland—Ukraine.

## Selected abbreviations

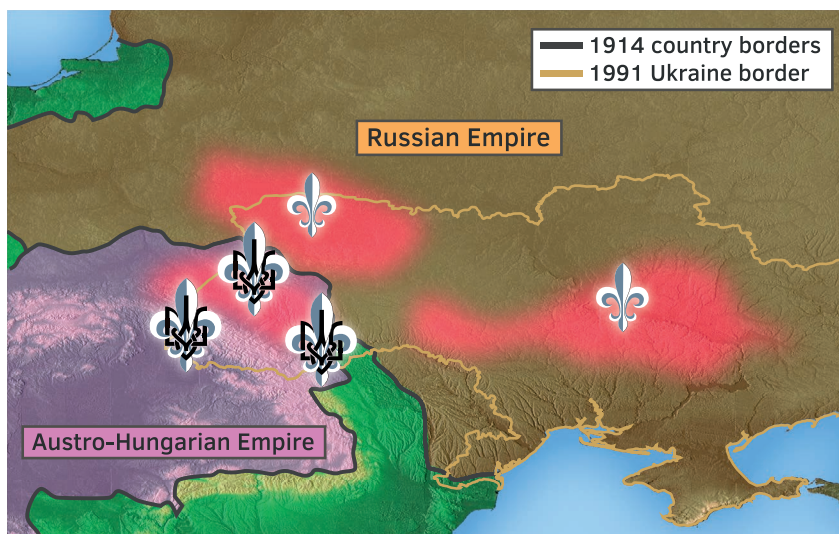
CBIE	Canadian Bureau for International Education
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CUPO	Conference of Ukrainian Plast Organizations
DPS	Displaced Persons (post-WWII refugees)
FSU	Former Soviet Union
HPR	Supreme Plast Council
HPS/HPB	Supreme Plast Executive
KPR, KPS	National Plast Council, Territorial Plast Executive (interwar Czech-occupied Transcarpathia) and National Plast Executive
KPZ, KPT	National Plast Conference, National Plast Camp
KRK	National Audit Committee
KTK	National Camp Committee
NOSU	National Organization of Scouts of Ukraine
NTsh	Shevchenko Scientific Society (est 1873 in Lviv)
OUN	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
PC	Plast Center
SKOB	<i>sylno, krasno, oberezhno, bystro!</i> (strongly, beautifully, carefully, quickly)
SKVU	World Congress of Free Ukrainians
SUM	Ukrainian Youth Association
SUPE	Union of Ukrainian Émigré Scouts
UCC	Ukrainian Central Committee (German-occupied Galicia during WWII)
UCC	Ukrainian Canadian Committee
UHA	Ukrainian Galician Army
UKTODOM	Ukrainian Coordinating Society for Child and Youth Care
UMPZ	International Plast Jamboree
UPA	Ukrainian Insurgent Army
UVAN	Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences
UVO	Ukrainian Military Organization
VPK	Supreme Plast Command
VPR	Supreme Plast Council
VSUM	Mentoring Society of Ukrainian Youth
WOSM	World Organization of the Scout Movement
WSB	World Scouting Bureau
ZB	Zolota Bulava

# Chapter 1

## The origins of Plast

Ukrainian scouting was the product of a variety of trends and influences. Most obvious and direct was the impact of the model created by Lord Baden-Powell in 1908. The British Boy Scout movement had as its goal the development strong character, good citizenship, chivalrous behaviour, and outdoor skills in young boys. But scouting in general—and Ukrainian scouting in particular—also reflected deeper, if less obvious, socioeconomic, cultural, and political trends. One was the celebration of youth that had come with 19th-century Romanticism. This cultural-intellectual current was not the only reason for the growing focus on youth; it was also the result of a socioeconomic transition that occurred throughout 19th- and early 20th-century Europe. Specifically, the focus shifted from rural communities—where elders, with their knowledge, experience, and social standing, held pride of place—to modern, urbanized societies, where youth, with its dynamics and creativity, gained ever more importance.

Along with these changes came a greater concern for education, especially innovative education that developed the individual as a whole rather than only his/her intellect. Here, the English and Americans made



*Growth of scouting under imperial rule. Note: the Plast emblem combines the traditional fleur-de-lis intertwined with the Ukrainian state emblem (tryzub, or trident).*

a major contribution by arguing that “returning to nature,” with all the practical skills this required, provided an ideal environment for character-building. Finally, there was a growing appreciation of what was then called “organic” and is now commonly termed “grass-roots” work—that is, the creation of organizations and institutions in society that facilitate progress in the modern world. This was especially relevant in Galicia, and allowed Western Ukrainians to compete with their political, socio-economic, and cultural rivals, the Poles. Thus, as these models, ideas, and trends coalesced in Western Ukraine in the early 20th century, one of the byproducts of this process was the establishment of the Ukrainian scouting organization Plast.

\* \* \*

## **Ukrainian youth organizations before Plast**

Long before Plast appeared in Eastern Galicia, there was a tradition of activism among Ukrainian students in that province of the Austrian Empire. Captivated by romanticized visions of Ukrainian history and the common folk (*narod*), in the 1870s–80s Lviv’s university students wandered from village to village (usually staying at the homes of clergy, who were likely their only educated inhabitants), clad in Cossack dress, carrying guitars, singing folk songs, and reciting poetry by Ukraine’s bard, Taras Shevchenko. By the 1890s and early 20th century, however, social concerns replaced such romantic visions. Students—and although typically this term meant post-secondary students, increasingly high school (*gymnasium*) students were also involved—were wont to form secret socialistically inclined discussion clubs (called *Drahomanivky*, after the famous Ukrainian political thinker Mykhailo Drahomanov). Meeting clandestinely in a dormitory or boardinghouse room, or at night by a river or in a ravine, older students introduced their younger fellows to the concepts of social justice and national consciousness. Often they took an oath of secrecy and loyalty to each other.

The undisputed center of secondary-level youth activism in Western Ukraine was the Academic Gymnasium in Lviv. Founded in 1784, this venerable Ukrainian-language institution had about 1,000 students enrolled in 1900. It was usually at the heart of the latest social, ideological, and political currents that influenced Western Ukrainian society. By 1900, however, youth activism began to spread beyond Lviv, although the city never relinquished its influential position at the core.

Youth movements also became much more organized and widespread. This was evident in the rapid growth of the Sokil and Sich movements. The Sokils were a gymnastics society, originally founded by the Czechs (copying German models) in the latter 19th century. Based on the idea that organized physical activity helps to foster upright character and thereby a healthy society, Sokil programming focused on disciplined, large-scale gymnastics exercises. Among Western Ukrainians, the number of Sokil branches, and the related, even larger and politically engaged Sich organization, grew quickly. By WWI Sokil in Ukraine had over 30,000 members, while Sich, led by Kyrylo Tryliovsky, boasted more than 80,000 members in Eastern Galicia and Bukovyna. Besides gymnastics, the Sokil and Sich organizations promoted firefighting, group calisthenics, and cultural activities. Periodically the massed members of these organizations, resplendent in handsome uniforms, demonstrated their skills at large colorful assemblies and parades. To facilitate such activities, both organizations acquired athletic fields, meeting halls, and publishing facilities.

But the Sich and Sokil movements had their limitations. One was that they were focused on young adults, not children (i.e., boys). Another was that they, and especially Sich, concentrated on village youths and did not address the needs of a relatively small but very important segment of Ukrainian youth: children of the intelligentsia. This segment of the youth population desired something more imaginative and adventurous than what gymnastics societies provided. Moreover, unlike village boys, for whom nature was a mundane reality in which they lived and worked—and the physical work was often very hard—the children of the urban intelligentsia, growing up within city walls and streets, were quite ready



*Lviv, 1910.*



to romanticize nature and view it as an ideal context for personal growth and adventure. Consequently, when the first information about scouting penetrated into Eastern Galicia, it would find a warm reception among this specific segment of Ukrainian youth, and their mentors.

The first Ukrainians who became acquainted with the idea of scouting were young teachers in Lviv, the major urban center of Eastern Galicia. A number of them concluded that the schools they taught in were exceedingly traditionalist and formalist, focusing only on rote learning while neglecting the character development of their pupils and failing to prepare them to become productive citizens. These young teachers frequently perused Western literature in search of new pedagogical ideas and methods. Often they would first learn of them from their political rivals, the Poles, since the latter were better informed about the latest developments in Europe. In 1909, the first Polish scout groups appeared in Lviv, which quickly became the center of the Polish scouting movement. This soon attracted the attention of young Ukrainian teachers; having encountered the Polish variant of scouting, however, they then sought to learn about the movement from the source—that is, the writings of Lord Baden-Powell.

## The founding of Plast

The names of three young teachers, acting independently of each other, are commonly associated with the founding, in 1911, of the scouting movement in Western Ukraine. In the fall of that year, Ivan Chmola, an undergraduate just completing training as a teacher, formed a group of scouts in Lviv. In December, Petro Franko, son of the famous Ukrainian writer Ivan Franko who taught at an affiliate of the Academic Gymnasium, also established a scout group. Meanwhile, that same year, a young professor and budding intellectual at the Academic Gymnasium, Oleksander Tysovsky, wrote a series of articles in a popular newspaper about the need for a new approach to the development of youth. All three were aware of the writings of Lord Baden-Powell and his Polish disciples, while Tysovsky was the one who studied them



*Ivan Chmola.*



*Petro Franko.*

the most systematically and thought most deeply about adapting English scouting to the Ukrainian environment. Aware that his ideas about the need for a character-building pedagogical approach might appear unconventional to many in the teaching profes-

sion, Tysovsky signed his articles with the pseudonym “The Eccentric.”

It was not Tysovsky but his older colleague at the Academic Gymnasium, Ivan Bobersky, who was in fact widely known as a quintessential eccentric. Bobersky was a physical education teacher at the Academic Gymnasium and head of the local Sokil branch’s gymnastics section. His fanatical dedication to gymnastics, physical fitness, and all forms of sport raised eyebrows among the more conservative segments of Galician society. It had been his urging—as Bobersky viewed scouting as a new form of sport—which prompted his younger colleagues at the gymnasium, Franko



*Oleksander “DROT” Tysovsky.*

### **Ivan Chmola**

Ivan Chmola was born on 6 March 1892 in Solotvyna Nadvirna (Transcarpathia), and graduated from the Lviv Polytechnic. An idealistic, disciplined, and practical man, Chmola believed that sooner or later, Ukrainians would have to fight to attain their national goals. Consequently, he focused on the military training of youth. For him, the main goal of Plast was to serve as a cell from which a future Ukrainian army would grow. These views proved to be very popular among high school and university students in the months prior to WWI.

During this war, Chmola (who was also one of the founders of the Sich Riflemen) rose to the rank of colonel in the Western Ukrainian Army. Afterwards, he taught high school in Drohobych and Yavoriv, and continued to organize Plast units. This led to his arrest in 1930 by the Polish authorities (which occupied Galicia until 1939) and incarceration for eighteen months. After his release, Chmola continued to work in the Clandestine Plast organization (banned by the Poles in 1929). In 1941, he was arrested by the Soviets and in all likelihood executed.



*Ivan Bobersky.*

and especially Tysovsky, to pay attention to the works of Baden-Powell. Although Bobersky did not directly participate in organizing the first scout groups, he did aid the budding movement by convincing the Sokil organization to support Plast and allow it to utilize its facilities.

### *The Sokil and Sich connection*

At the very outset, the small Plast groups that appeared in Lviv, and especially the county towns of Eastern Galicia, benefitted greatly from the moral and material support they received from the well-established Sokil organization. Firstly, like Bobersky, leading members of Sokil were older colleagues and friends of Franko and Tysovsky, with whom they shared common interests. Secondly, Sokil did not view the budding Plast groups as competitors, since it was focused on the older (over 18) age groups. Consequently, the Sokil leadership probably considered Plast as a potential junior affiliate organization that would funnel its youthful members, once they were of age, into the gymnastics organization. And thirdly, the Sokil members viewed scouting activities as a new form of sport that could enrich their own program. In fact, in April 1912 the Academic Gymnasium's Plast group became affiliated with Sokil, which established a special committee on 4 May to study "this new form of physical education." Soon after, the Plast affiliate of Sokil in Lviv grew to 44 members, and town branches of the Sokil society also added Plast affiliates.

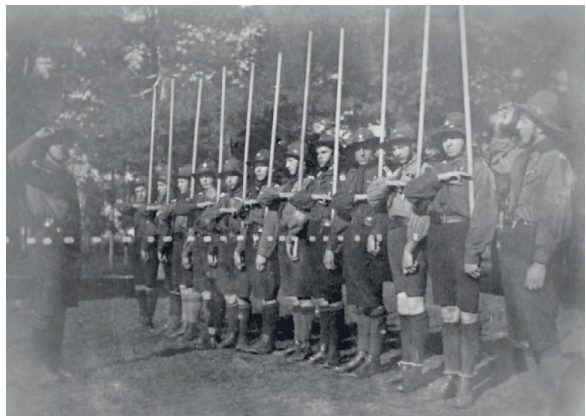
The support provided by Sokil took various forms. Much of the early literature about Plast—as yet meagre and modest—appeared with the help of Sokil or in its own publications. For example, the earliest, *Plastovyi tabir* (Scouting Camp), began as a supplement published by Sokil, which came to include the first-ever Ukrainian-language introduction to scouting: Tysovsky's *Plast* (1913). In 1914 Bobersky wrote an article in a Sokil calendar popularizing Plast; he stated, "Life at camp, far from domestic comforts, is the best way to temper a youth...Plast is called upon to develop citizens and defenders of the fatherland." In September 1913, another Sokil activist, Yaroslav Yaroslavenko, set up the first scouting outfitter in his apartment, where boys could purchase Plast uniforms, staves, hats, and camping gear.

The central Sokil branch in Lviv also allowed Plast members to use its extensive athletic fields, and its members joined those scouts in field exercises. The support from Sokil and (to a lesser extent) Sich was crucial to Plast in the early days. It stood in sharp contrast to the lack of interest that other Ukrainian organizations exhibited towards the scouting movement. While Plast adopted its theory and method from Lord Baden-Powell, its Ukrainian patriotic and national orientation were copied from Sich and Sokil.

### *The earliest Plast groups*

The earliest Plast groups appeared independently of each other. Their founders knew little about the others' efforts. Indeed, each had his own particular understanding of what the goals and methods of Plast should be. Yet each, in his way, made an invaluable contribution to the launching of the new organization.

The first Plast group was formed by Ivan Chmola, with the aid of Olena Stepanivna (Dashkevych) and Savina Sydorovych. In the fall of 1911, Chmola recruited about 50 boys and girls from various Lviv secondary schools, such as the Academic Gymnasium affiliate, the State College, the Women's College of the Ukrainian Pedagogical Society, and the seminary of the Basilian Sisters; they met in a Sich hall. As one participant recalled, "It was quite dark in the hall...everyone spoke in half-whispers; there was a celebratory atmosphere. In the crowd I noticed a rather short, dark-haired student in spectacles and an embroidered shirt. He was speaking with someone and was clearly nervous that others were so late in arriving. When all had come, Comrade Ch. [Chmola] made a speech; he spoke vigorously and enthusiastically. He was obviously very keen, and galvanized us with his presentation. He described the work of the Scouts in England and stressed the need for us to have a similar organization. He emphasized that our Plast movement should not be interpreted as a game; it should lay the groundwork for the creation of our own [insurgent] Ukrainian army."<sup>1</sup>



*One of the first scout groups, 1912.*

### **The name “Plast”**

There are two views on the origins of the name “Plast.” According to the first, at one of its early meetings Tysovsky’s group of scouts was discussing what would be a good name for their movement. Bobersky happened to overhear the conversation. Having recently read a newspaper article about the Kuban Cossacks (descendants of the famous Zaporozhian Cossacks), whose intrepid scouts were called *plastuny*, he suggested that the group call themselves by that name, since the qualities and skills they sought to acquire were similar to those of the Cossack scouts. It followed that their organization should be called “Plast.”

The second (more likely) version emphasizes Franko’s role. In November 1911 he pressed Bobersky to suggest a name for the organization. The two concentrated on names starting with the Cyrillic “s” in order to find something similar to “scout.” When they failed to find a satisfactory name, Franko went home, perhaps to consult with his famous father or to peruse some books dealing with the Cossacks in general and the Kuban Cossacks in particular. Soon after, he produced the term *plastuny* and popularized it in his article in *Dilo* that appeared on 2 December 1911. In any case, the chosen term was meant to emphasize an image of the Cossacks that Ukrainian boys could relate to. In a similar fashion, the Polish scouts were called *harcerze*, after the bold Polish horsemen of the early modern period. These names were clearly meant to give a national flavor to these local offshoots of the international scouting movement.

Around 30 of those present enrolled in the new organization, but only about 20 remained as active members. They considered themselves to be authentic scouts: they read scout manuals translated from English, Polish, and German, followed the scouting precepts, learned the knots, practiced the Morse Code and semaphore, and went on hikes. But the group also had a definite military aspect. Their activities included learning how to fire pistols and rifles, and conducting military maneuvers. Members focused especially on scouting skills that could be utilized in partisan warfare. Sensing that a major military conflict was coming, Chmola was clearly intent on training Ukrainian youth in military skills.

Chmola’s group, which included girls, also emphasized discipline. They participated in long, demanding hikes in the environs of Lviv, and attempted (with limited success) to conduct group maneuvers in the night. Although the group did not yet have uniforms, it was equipped with basic

scout gear and maps. Thus, it was able to organize the first scout camp, in the summer of 1912, near Mount Hoverlia in the Carpathian Mountains. There, under Chmola's strict supervision, fourteen scouts spent two weeks practicing basic scouting and military skills. Thus, Chmola is credited with organizing the first camp of the Ukrainian scouting movement.

In December 1911, Petro Franko organized an experimental clandestine group at the affiliate of the Academic Gymnasium where he worked as a phys-ed instructor. It consisted of students from the upper grades of the high school, and based its program on the works of Baden-Powell and the Polish scouting pioneer Andrzej Małkowski. By the spring of 1912, the group had grown to about 120 members. Franko also organized a group of girl scouts at the teachers' college of the Ukrainian Pedagogical Society. The primary focus of their activity was physical education, especially hiking. For Franko, this was the major attraction of scouting.

Furthermore, Franko devoted his energies to promoting the scouting idea. On 2 December 1911 he published a short article in the widely read *Dilo* newspaper that first introduced Ukrainian society to the term

### **Petro Franko**

Born 21 June 1890 in Nahuievychi, Drohobych county, the son of Ivan Franko, Western Ukraine's most famous and respected writer. Petro Franko completed his studies at the Lviv Polytechnic. Energetic and enthusiastic, he was active in the Sokil gymnastics club, where he was greatly influenced by an older colleague, Ivan Bobersky. Franko worked as a physical education instructor at an affiliate of the Academic Gymnasium. Because of his command of English, he quickly became acquainted with the writings of Lord Baden-Powell. For Franko, scouting was primarily a form of physical education.

During WWI, he served as an officer in the Sich Riflemen, and in 1918 he became a captain of the fledgling air force of the Western Ukrainian Army. Franko did not participate in Plast activities after WWI. Initially he found employment as a teacher in Kolomyia, and in 1927–36 he worked in Soviet Ukraine as an engineer. Fortunately, he was able to return to Galicia before the onset of the Stalinist purges. When the Soviets invaded Polish-ruled Galicia in 1939, they elected Franko to the parliament of the USSR, the Supreme Soviet, most probably to associate his famous name with their regime. When the Soviets retreated before the German onslaught in 1941, Franko was among those they evacuated. His subsequent fate is unknown.

“Plast” and the ideals behind it. Much like Baden-Powell, who associated scouting with the feats of the Boer scouts in the Boer War, Franko identified Plast with the exploits of the Kuban Cossacks in their struggle against Caucasus mountaineers. He stressed how the Cossack scouts or *plastuny* depended on their wits, stamina, courage, and knowledge of nature to survive in the wild frontier. Franko argued that “in a healthy natural environment, in the fresh air, boys gain strength, courage, endurance, and patriotism.” In conclusion, Franko announced that the Sokil subsidiary *Ukraïnskyi Zmahovyi Soiuz* (Ukrainian [Athletic] Competition Association) was planning to establish Plast along similar lines to the scouting movement in England.

Apparently, Franko’s goal was to create a mass organization as quickly as possible. He began an extensive correspondence with Plast groups that were appearing in the county towns of Galicia. In 1913, together with Tysovsky, he edited the *Plastovi tabir* page in the Sokil newsletter, and published his own manual, *Plastovi hry i zabavy*. On 6 April of that year, he organized in Lviv the first assembly of adult Plast activists as well as representatives of other organizations. Franko also scored a public relations coup for Plast when, on 28 June 1914, he included a group of about 60 scouts, dressed in recently imported scout uniforms from England, in a huge parade of the Sokil and Sich organizations in Lviv. The Ukrainian scouts created a sensation among the masses of onlookers.



*Scouts in new uniforms parading in Lviv, 1914.*

The interest in scouting on the part of Oleksander Tysovsky, a member of the Galician intellectual elite, was probably an outgrowth of his interest in pedagogical theory and methods. In 1911, as a 25-year-old professor at the prestigious Academic Gymnasium, he wrote a series of articles using the pseudonym “The Eccentric” that criticized current pedagogical methods. His primary argument was that the school system gave boys knowledge but neglected the development of their character. It was probably his older colleague at the Academic Gymnasium, Ivan Bobersky, who brought to Tysovsky’s attention “a new type of sport” called scouting. But the character-building aspects of scouting were what interested Tysovsky the most. With the acquiescence, and even support, of school authorities—and in contrast to Chmola’s and Franko’s semi-clandestine activities—Tysovsky assembled a group of boys in late 1911. After thoroughly familiarizing them with the principles of scouting, he had the group, numbering about 40, take the scout’s oath on 12 April 1912. This event is commonly considered to be the formal beginning of Plast.

On the basis of this group, the first Plast boy scout troop was formed, named after the Cossack Hetman Sahaidachny. Like Franko, Tysovsky was eager to identify Plast with Cossack traditions and terminology. He also promoted the Plast idea by publishing, with the help of the Sokil organization, a short pamphlet in 1913, entitled *Plast*, that introduced the general public to the principles of scouting. Unlike Franko, Tysovsky discouraged the involvement of adults in Plast activities; he believed that the scouts themselves should decide how to conduct their affairs. Nor was he interested in a rapid expansion of Plast, believing that it was better to have fewer members but truly committed ones. Unlike Chmola, however, he categorically rejected the idea that Plast should prepare youth for military service. This, he believed, was the function of the army. Tysovsky also wanted to see Plast evolve into an independent organization, not one linked to Sokil or Sich or any other organization or institution.

Tysovsky’s insistence that Plast members either follow scouting rules to the letter or leave the movement led many of his original recruits to abandon Plast. Others left Tysovsky’s group because its anti-militarist position seemed to be out of step with the attitudes of many young Ukrainians on the eve of WWI. Consequently, when the war broke out, Tysovsky’s group dwindled to about 10–12 members. Nevertheless, they and Tysovsky were the ones who would embody the principles upon which Plast would build once it re-emerged after 1920. Therefore, Tysovsky came to be viewed as the foremost of the founding fathers of Plast.



### **Dr. Oleksander “DROT” Tysovsky**

Oleksander Tysovsky (pseud. “DROT,” a concatenation of Dr. O.T.), born 9 August 1886, died 29 March 1968 in Vienna. After graduating from Lviv University, where he majored in science, Tysovsky taught from 1911 to 1939 at the prestigious Academic Gymnasium in Lviv. In 1913 he wrote the first systematic introduction to scouting ideas for the Ukrainian public, and in 1921 he published *Zhyttia v Plasti*, which became the standard manual of the Ukrainian scouting movement. From 1921 until 1930 Tysovsky presided over the Supreme Plast Council. In 1939–41 he worked as a science professor at Lviv University, and in 1944 he emigrated with his family to Vienna, where he maintained close contact with Plast centers around the world.

Tysovsky was known as an intellectual and a theoretician of character development. Composed, logical, and somewhat distant in personal relations, he insisted that character development remain the central focus of Plast. He was also a strong advocate of keeping Plast free of political involvement and independent of other organizations. His greatest contribution was that he formulated the theoretical basis on which Plast developed. He also successfully linked key scouting principles with Ukrainian Cossack traditions. It is generally recognized that he was not only a founder of Plast but the one who saw to it that the organization remained true to its original, character-building goals.

Although these three individuals were the most influential and prominent in the early days of Plast, they were certainly not the only pioneers of the growing organization. As the Plast idea was propagated, supporters appeared, especially among schoolteachers. In Lviv, Myron Fedusevych and Daria Navrotska (Nawrocka), both phys-ed teachers, were also attracted to the idea of scouting and helped to organize Plast scout patrols. Soon, a series of committed individuals appeared throughout Galicia and helped the organization to grow.

## **Spreading throughout Eastern Galicia**

News about Plast spread quickly to other counties, and new scout patrols and troops were founded—more quickly in towns closer to Lviv such as Stryi and Sambir, and more slowly in outlying districts. Often the initiators were high school teachers seeking to provide their charges some-

thing constructive to do as an extracurricular activity. Consequently, many of the new groups were based out of schools, where they were initially viewed as an extension of the phys-ed classes. Others appeared as subsections of the Sokil or Sich societies, which provided them legal status as well as access to the societies' facilities and adult sponsors. The troops associated with Sich were more likely to emphasize military training.

The Austrian authorities ruling Galicia at the time did not discourage Plast, because it seemed to provide boys with a smattering of military skills that might be useful in case of war. However, Polish state employees who dominated local administrations in Galicia—especially school directors, who invariably supported the Polish scouts—often tried to discourage or ban the formation of Plast in their schools. This often forced Ukrainians to establish and run their Plast groups surreptitiously.

Stryi is a typical example of how Plast spread into smaller towns throughout Galicia. In September of 1912, 15-year-old Damian Pelensky heard from his cousin about Plast groups in Lviv. He also observed some newly formed Polish scouts in his town. After reading the Polish scouting manuals, he translated relevant sections into Ukrainian, made copies on a hectograph, and circulated them among his Ukrainian classmates in secret (his school was largely Polish). Soon afterward a group of 15–20 boys met at night in a nearby gulch. Once they read through the scout principles, they took the Plast Oath. “It was a moving, inspiring moment,” Pelensky later wrote, “We all felt we were creating something great, unprecedented.”<sup>2</sup>

Following this event, they carefully approached boys from older grades and drew them into their group. Their biggest problem was to gain legal recognition for their troop, since Plast was not yet a legal entity. Since they knew that their Polish school director would not support them, they joined the local Sokil society and formed an autonomous Plast unit within that organization.

Different circumstances prevailed in each town, and determined the distinctive character of Plast in that place. For example, Plast in Sambir grew rapidly and took on a decidedly Sich Riflemen character, because the local Sich (a militaristic organization) had been prohibited by the Polish town council, and thus young militants enrolled in Plast as an alternative. In 1913–14, the young scouts in Stanyslaviv (today Ivano-Frankivsk) also favored militaristic games and exercises—largely due to the fact that the troop leader, high school teacher Hryhori Kuchun, was also a reserve officer. Meanwhile, the scout troop in Peremyshl, formed in October 1912 (first led by Evhen Lobovych and then by Teodor Polikha), functioned as a sub-unit of the local gymnastics and cultural society. In some places, youth

Др. ОЛ. ТИШОВСЬКИЙ.

ПЛАСТ

Львів, 1913.

НАКАЛОМ „ВІСТІЙ З ЗАПОРІЖА“, ЛЬВІВ, УЛІЦЯ РУСЬКА 20.  
В ДРУКАРНІ НАЗЕВОВОГО ТОВАРИСТВА ІМЕНІ ПЕРЩЕЧКА.

*Tysovsky's Plast, published by Visti z Zaporozha (Lviv 1913).*

led by O. Hundych and associated with the local Sich branch, introduced Ukrainian boys and girls in three high schools (one of them a girls' school) to scouting. After some preparatory activity, they formed the Ivan Bohun Regiment of Ukrainian Scouts in Chernivtsi. Although leading Plast student activists such as Khraplyvy (Chraplywy) and Halysky were also reserve officers, Plast in Bukovyna focused more on gymnastics and camping than on military exercises. It quickly became highly popular, attracting the majority of Ukrainian high school students in Chernivtsi as well as establishing groups in Kitsman, Vyzhnytsi, and Vashkivtsi. By mid-1914, Plast in Bukovyna had a membership of about 800.

## Early organizational issues

With growth came growing pains. It soon became evident that various Plast groups differed greatly as far as methods, programs, and goals were concerned. The various troops were not in touch with each other, or with the nexus of Plast activity in Lviv. Some groups adhered strictly to the rules of scouting—and lost less-committed members—while others modified these rules and veered away from scouting. Many older students complained that Plast was simply a “game” that did not prepare Ukrainian youth for the national liberation struggle.

groups followed the principles and methods of the scouting movement, with a strong admixture of Cossack lore, but did not call themselves scouts. When a Plast patrol was founded at the Rohatyn high school (September 1913), both groups off en pursued their activities together. In any case, Plast spread throughout Eastern Galicia not in a spectacular manner but at a steady pace. By 1913 there were Plast troops in 18 cities and towns—and most notably, Lviv, Stryi, and Terebovlia had girl scout troops.

*Bukovyna*

Early in 1914, Plast spread from Galicia into neighbouring Bukovyna. There, a group of university students,

At this point, the energetic Franko seized the initiative and called the first conference of Plast leaders, which took place in Lviv on 6 April 1913. All the representatives worked together to establish a common set of governing principles and practices. The assembly adopted a formal charter for the organization, as well as the program directives that had been developed by Tysovsky. Requirements for the three boy and girl scout ranks were determined, a drill manual was compiled, and a common uniform was approved, based on the English model. Franko had hoped that the assembly would form a centralized command structure, but Tysovsky opposed the idea on the grounds that it would discourage youthful initiative. Consequently, a Plast Information Committee was established, whose main goal was to popularize scouting in general and Plast in particular. Tysovsky was elected its chair and Franko his deputy. Severyn Levytsky—who would later become one of the pillars of the new organization—was assigned responsibility for administration, uniforms, and camping gear.

It soon became evident, however, that the new organization needed more than publicity; it did in fact require a central body that would deal with the myriad problems that constantly appeared. Consequently, on 12 February 1914, a second Plast conference was held, with 30 branches represented. It created the *Oserednia Plastova Uprava* (Central Plast Administration, or OPU) as a central organ. The members of this new body were those who had previously served on the Plast Information Committee.

The OPU existed for only six months; the outbreak of WWI would force it to disband. Nonetheless, it accomplished much in this short period. It began negotiations with Austrian authorities for Plast to be recognized as an independent organization. In response, the Austrians proposed that Plast become an autonomous part of the Austrian scouting movement. However, this issue was left unresolved.

There was also notable progress on the organizational front. For the first time, all Plast branches registered with the OPU. They also submitted lists of their members and reports on their programs. Groups that failed to do so were considered to be rogue units and expelled. To facilitate coordination and administration, in April 1914 Eastern Galicia was divided into eleven Plast districts: Lviv, Stryi, Stanyslaviv (today Ivano-Frankivsk), Ternopil, Chortkiv, Kolomyia, Rohatyn, Zolochiv, Sokal, Peremyshl, and Sambir. However, measures to establish district offices were interrupted by the war.

The issue of uniforms elicited heated discussion. The adoption of an English-style uniform caused some dissatisfaction, as many insisted that it should have features that would distinguish a Ukrainian scout from other

scouts. Therefore, in August 1913 Franko proposed that the Plast uniform consist of the following: a classic, wide-brimmed Boer khaki hat, dark blue shirt and knee-length shorts (quite unusual at the time), grey knee socks, and an obligatory 2-meter-long scout staff. In May 1914 the OPU made some modifications, and grey flannel shirts and shorts were introduced.

### *Publishing*

From the outset, it was clear to the pioneers of Plast that they must develop an active publications program. Firstly, it was needed to inform the public about the movement and its goals; and secondly, it was the most effective means of informing the membership about the organization's activities, problems, plans, and events. Initially, Franko, Tysovsky, and Chmola wrote articles about Plast in the popular *Dilo* and other newspapers. The magazine *Vidhuky* also lent its pages to a lengthy discussion of the new organization, and the Sokil society included a Plast page in its newsletter.

In December 1912, the Plast group led by Tysovsky at the Academic Gymnasium produced the first independent, albeit very modest, Plast newsletter, *Plastovyi lystok* (Scouting Leaflet), which was distributed to the districts. After the first conference, publishing was treated more seriously and systematically. The OPU produced brochures on topics such as Plast uniforms and insignia, and Franko published his booklet on scout games, *Plastovi hry i zabavy*. He also edited a Plast page in the *Nove slovo* newspaper. Under his energetic editorship, starting on 3 January 1914, the first independent Plast journal, *Plastovyi tabir* (Scouting Camp), began to appear, allowing the OPU to regularly distribute its directives, reports, letters, and other information to Plast members. However, only six issues appeared before the war broke out.

\* \* \*

Thus, on the eve of WWI, Plast as an organization was beginning to gain momentum. While in terms of numbers it was no match for larger organizations such as Sich and So-



*Scout wearing an adapted English-style uniform, 1913.*

kil, it was definitely establishing itself in the gymnasia, that is, among the educated urban youth. Plast troops were active in 37 cities and towns, and it had about 500 full-fledged scouts (*rozvidchyky*) and over 1,000 associate members (*prykhylnyky*). As noted above, a highlight in the history of prewar Plast was the participation of its units in the huge Sich and Sokil rally held in Lviv on 28 June 1914, in which about 60 scouts, led by Franko, marched in newly acquired uniforms to the enthusiastic applause of the spectators. Ominously, this demonstration of Ukrainian youth organizations was interrupted by the dramatic announcement that Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been assassinated. Little did the proud young participants of this impressive event realize that within weeks, many of them would be marching again—this time to fight in the bloody battles of WWI.

## The 1914–20 period

The activity of Plast and its members during the turbulent years 1914–20 can be viewed from two perspectives: firstly, that of the role played by Plast members in the Struggle for Independence of Ukraine; and secondly, that of the severely limited activity of the organization itself during the war and foreign occupation.

As might be expected, the First World War severely depleted the ranks of Plast's leaders and members. The three founders—Chmola, Franko, and Tysovsky—served in the Austrian army. A large number of adult scouts, but also some who were as young as 16 or 17, enthusiastically volunteered for the Sich Riflemen, a 2,500-strong military unit, created by the Austrian authorities, that consisted of the most patriotic young men (and some women) in Western Ukrainian society. Among Plast members, the desire to serve in the Sich Riflemen was so high that members of older troops (including the one in Peremyshl, for example) volunteered *in toto*.

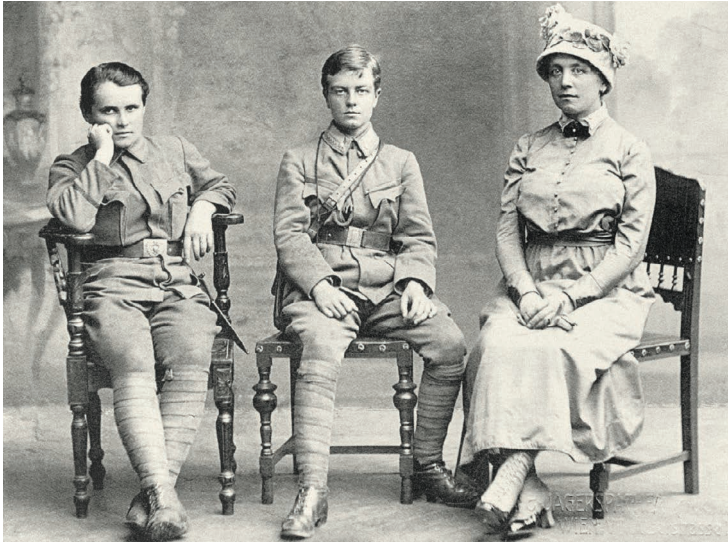
Viewed by Ukrainians as the potential core of a future Ukrainian National Army, the Sich Riflemen were especially attractive to the militaristically inclined Chmola and his scouts. Consequently, they were among the first to receive medals for bravery—and among the earliest fatalities. Plast members were universally acknowledged as being better prepared than others for military service—especially for conducting dangerous patrols behind enemy lines. For example, the former scout Mykhailo Minchak gained renown as an extraordinarily brave and skillful patrol leader. His exploits, and those of other scouts, prompted Chmola to declare proudly, “We were well trained.” Although still very young, a number of scouts rose through the ranks to become respected officers in the Sich Riflemen.

The exploits of the Sich Riflemen and their Plast members were not confined only to Galicia. During the war, many of them were captured by the Russians. When the Revolution of 1917 led to the collapse of the Tsarist Empire, they did not return to Western Ukraine. Instead, they congregated in Kyiv, where a Ukrainian republic was being established. There, they organized the so-called Kyiv Sich Riflemen that became a key military mainstay of the new government. Again, it was active or former scouts such as Vasyl Kuchabsky, Roman Sushko, and Chmola who were in the forefront of these developments. Many, such as the famous Fedir Chernyk, died heroically in battle. Their exploits would lay the basis for a cult of military heroes that Plast would assiduously cultivate in the postwar period.

In 1918, the Plast scouts who had been too young to enroll in the Sich Riflemen at the outset of the war would get their chance to fight for the Ukrainian cause. Because their age cohort was much larger than that of their older colleagues, they would do so in much greater numbers than in 1914. By the fall of 1918, moreover, it was evident that the Habsburg Empire was also about to collapse. It was also clear that when this happened, Ukrainians would have to fight the Poles for control of Western Ukraine. On the night of 31 October (os), a group of Ukrainian officers secretly gathered in Lviv. Their intention was to seize control suddenly of Lviv and other major cities, proclaim a Western Ukrainian state, and confront the Poles with an accomplished fact. However, their problem was that they had only a small military force at their disposal—60 officers and about 1,400 soldiers. Under the circumstances, the support of Ukrainian youths, especially in the cities, with their large Polish populations, was essential and even crucial. Plast members quickly demonstrated that they were ready, willing, and able to provide such support.

Two days before the historical takeover of Lviv, Lieutenant Dmytro Palijiw gathered a group of scouts and informed them that, on the orders of the newly formed Ukrainian military command, they were to reconnoiter the entire city, identify the locations where there were large concentrations of non-Ukrainian troops, and establish how they were armed and what fortifications they occupied. The task was strikingly similar to the exercises Plast members had conducted before the war, but now it was no longer a game. Indeed, this was very much the type of activity that Baden-Powell's scouts had performed in the Boer War and that inspired him to create the Boy Scouts in Great Britain.

As one scout, Vasyl Horbai, noted in his memoirs, "Late into the night I studied the maps of my sector. At daybreak, I awoke...and with my friend we walked along the wet streets...all day we were happy



*Girl scouts were members of the Sich Riflemen (1917 photo).*

and proud... We strove to fulfill the orders to the best of our ability: we marked the points on our map where there were military fortifications, and in the village of Sokilnyky we found Austrian artillery..."<sup>3</sup> When the Ukrainian forces staged their coup, about 80 scouts, mostly from the Academic Gymnasium, gathered in the National Home, where they obtained arms and placed themselves at the disposal of the newly formed military command. Tysovsky also arrived and urged them to carry out their orders conscientiously. Under the command of Semen Horuk, they fulfilled reconnoitering duties in the bloody conflict that broke out with the Poles. It should be noted that at the same time, Polish scouts were carrying out similar tasks on their side of the barricades. It was no doubt a situation that would have caused Lord Baden-Powell some discomfort.

In the smaller Galician county towns, scouts were also at the forefront of these dramatic events. In Stryi, about 30 Plast members were an important part of the forces that took control of the town. They even formed a separate company that was responsible for guarding the command center, post and telegraph offices, and the railway station. After fulfilling these duties for about three months, members of the company were allowed to return to their schools, where, in recognition of their services, they were granted the right to wear their military uniforms. In Terebovlia, Halych, Stanyslaviv, Ternopil, and other towns, scouts played key roles in establishing Ukrainian rule, demonstrating convincingly that the skills they had learned and practiced before the war were not wasted.





*Plastunyy in the trenches of the Sich Riflemen, 1916.  
Ivan Chmola was a founder of both organizations.*

In the late fall of 1918, when full-scale war broke out with the Poles and the Ukrainian Galician Army (UHA) was formed, rank-and-file Plast members, now 17–18 years of age, volunteered en masse. In many units, the majority of the soldiers were members of Plast. There was even a separate Plast unit—the Stryi Plast Company of Young Volunteers—entirely composed of scouts from Stryi, led by Damian Pelensky. As in the case of the Sich Riflemen, many Plast members received medals for bravery in action, and many rose to officer rank. Estimates place the total number of Plast members in the UHA at about 450–600. This would mean that nearly all Plast members who were of age served in the Ukrainian army, invariably as volunteers.

Despite the fact that large numbers of scouts had gone off to war and that Ukraine had plunged into an extremely tumultuous period of foreign invasions and concomitant political, social, and economic upheaval, Plast made a determined effort to continue to function as an organization amidst the chaos. When Russian armies invaded Galicia in 1914, the entire Plast command was forced to flee. But within six months,

German and Austrian forces had recaptured Lviv. On their own initiative, 37 students of the Academic Gymnasium established four patrols of scouts. Soon after, Tysovsky returned to Lviv and resumed his role as mentor of the reconstituted groups. He was supported in this work by a new group of scout leaders, including D. Pasternak, Yu. Studynsky, Ya. Kupchynsky, and Hryhori Luzhnytsky. A temporary meeting place was established at the home of Professor Studynsky.

Because wartime conditions precluded traditional scouting activities such as hiking and camping, the members of Plast concentrated on cultural work, such as establishing libraries of Ukrainian literature, staging competitions based on knowledge of Ukrainian history and literature, or charitable activities such as gathering funds for invalids and helping the efforts to control epidemics. A notable feature of Plast activity during this time was that it was organized and conducted by the scouts themselves, since there were few adults available to give them guidance. Another characteristic of the Plast program at this time was that it became less associated with the schools and more oriented towards general public needs.

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An event of great importance for Plast occurred on 10 Sept 1917, when the universally revered Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, Andrei Sheptytsky, returned from exile in Russia. Plast members greeted him at the Lviv railway station, and on 15 October formed an honor guard at the official celebration of his return. These ceremonies heralded the beginning of the celebrated close relationship that would develop between the saintly metropolitan and the youth movement. Plast also raised its profile when it took part in the funeral of the famous writer Ivan Franko. Consciously or unconsciously, it began to associate itself with the leading lights of Western Ukrainian society.

In October 1917 Plast reestablished its central organ, the Supreme Plast Council (*Holovna Plastova Rada*, or HPR); although headed by Tysovsky, it consisted exclusively of high-school students such as Yu. Studynsky, O. Kulyk, and M. Pezhansky. The modest revival of Plast activity spread beyond the Academic Gymnasium to other high schools, a number of which were for girls. A scout troop was established at the Basilian Gymnasium for Girls, and another was organized by the teacher Myron Fedusevych and led by Katria Hrynevych (daughter of the noted author) at the Ukrainian College for Women. Attempts were also made to rejuvenate Plast in the provinces. Although there was some success—notably in Stryi, which always remained a strong Plast branch—the task proved to be very difficult in Peremyshl, Rohatyn, and other towns, because the attention of

### **Early awards**

In its early days, Plast did not have a system of awards for notable service and achievements. However, Tysovsky and other leaders maintained a “Golden Book” in which the names of outstanding scouts were kept. Some examples from the 1st Plast regiment (*polk*):

9 March 1918—Orest Kulyk, a member of Plast for five years, during a time of wartime chaos and enemy invasion, has been completely faithful to Plast values. He is truly an example for all of us. He was the first to show that he is committed and lives according to Plast ideals. His creativity and personal bravery have added greatly to the good reputation that our organization enjoys in our society.

28 April 1918—Lev Kopystensky, for his enthusiastic efforts during an especially difficult time. He was one of the first to join Plast and remained faithful to its ideals, despite the initial misunderstanding of the Plast idea by his friends, until our age group was interrupted by the war... In sum, for his heroic death, and unusually idealistic life (K. died on the Italian front as a lieutenant in the Austrian army).

November 1920—Mykhailo Pezhansky, from the very beginning as a little junior, then as a scout and a rover-rank scout, fulfilled with great enthusiasm all Plast functions... and as leader of his troop, during memorable but dangerous times (November 1918) he exhibited adventurous enthusiasm, risking his own health (and life), proving that he was a genuine member of the Ukrainian Plast.

16 April 1921—Bohdan Makarushka (enrolled in the Ukrainian Galician Army in 1918). The struggle for the freedom of Ukraine gave him an opportunity to demonstrate his skills and talents in the threatening maelstrom. Faithful to the Plast idea, he sought to help his people in any way he could, not fearing the danger to his own health and life... after experiencing terrible difficulties, dangers, and mortal threats, he returned to us to continue his work in Plast.

both youths and adults was focused on the war. When Poland occupied all of Eastern Galicia in 1919, Plast activity became practically impossible.

## **Scouting in Central and Eastern Ukraine**

In the part of Ukraine that until 1917 was under the Russian Empire, the scouting movement experienced much greater difficulties in taking root. To a large extent, this was due to the fact that conditions there—especially after the 1917 Revolution—were even more chaotic than in Western Ukraine. As in Galicia, scouting in Eastern Ukraine—

where the term “Scouting” rather than “Plast” was used—was originally associated with the school system. In the summer of 1914 a physician, A. Anokhin, was the first to attempt to establish scout patrols, with the support of the Kyiv school board, but the war forced him to abandon his efforts. Unlike Anokhin, who was a Russophile and tried to instill loyalty to the empire among his charges, in late 1916–early 1917 Yuri Honchariv-Honcharenko wished to establish “a genuinely Ukrainian scout troop” in Izmail (Odesa region). But there is little indication that this effort produced concrete results.

After the Revolution of 1917 and the founding of the Ukrainian National Republic, conditions for scouting in Eastern Ukraine appeared to be more promising. On 1 August 1917, Evhen Slabchenko, a former Plast activist in Galicia and author of a book titled *Ukrainian Scout*, organized the “First Bila Tserkva Troop of Scout-Youths.” It had a clearly national orientation, as is evident from the oath its members took (which is virtually identical to the one taken today): “I promise upon my honor that I will fulfill all my duties before my nation and all humanity, that I will help those around me, and will observe scout directives—now and forever.” In the fall of 1917 the troop had 80 members, and by March 1918 it had grown to about 200. The troop’s uniforms were based on the British model, and its slogan was “Be prepared.” Although the Bila Tserkva troop had no contact with Plast in Galicia, it did receive some support—for example, Ukrainian-language scouting literature from Ukrainian officers, some of whom were former scouts, serving in the Austrian forces that occupied the region. This promising start was aborted, however, upon the arrival of the Bolsheviks.

A scout-type group called *Sich-maty* “Mother-Sich” also appeared in November 1919 in Kamianets-Podilskyi, where the government of the UNR was now based. It sought to organize its activities on the basis of Baden-Powell’s *Scouting for Boys*; however, a lack of scout leaders hampered its development. In the spring of 1920, at the initiative of Galician soldiers, a scouting organization based on the Plast model and following the principles outlined by Tysovsky was organized in the schools of Kamianets-Podilskyi. However, it ceased to exist once the Ukrainian government evacuated the city.

Additionally, there are indications that small groups of scouts, usually numbering 25–40 members, briefly existed in such cities as Kyiv, Kaniv, Katerynoslav (later Dnipropetrovsk, today Dnipro), Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, and Uman during the 1918–19 period. By the fall of 1920, however, they were all disbanded on the orders of the Bolshevik government. The godless, insular, and repressive anti-individual nature of the Communist regime precluded any kind of true scouting activity in Soviet-ruled Ukraine for

generations to come—although the authorities had no compunction about adopting parts of that movement for their Young Pioneers organization.

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Despite the turmoil of the WWI years, Plast continued to operate, albeit in a much more modest form, demonstrating that it had in short order put down surprisingly strong roots among Western Ukrainian youth. Moreover, the outstanding performance of Plast members during the armed conflicts was frequently noted by Plast members and Western Ukrainian society, greatly raising the prestige of the organization. It also served as a persuasive argument that scouting skills and activities were not merely games but rather an effective preparation for significant success—military or otherwise. Finally, it would allow Plast to prove its commitment to the national liberation struggle and develop a cult of home-grown heroes, with whom future members would be encouraged to identify.

Notes:

1. Dmytrenko, H. 'Tainyi Plast pered viinoiu,' *Nova khata*, 1936, no. 22, p. 10–12
2. Pelenska, I., and K. Babiak (eds). *Stryishchyna: Istorychno-memuarnyi zbirnyk*, vol. 1 (New York: NTsh 1990), p. 408
3. Horbai, V. '1 lystopada 1918,' *Pershyi lystopad 1918*, ed. M. Hutsuliak (Kyiv: Lybid 1993), p. 232–40



*Boy scout camp, 1920s.*

## Chapter 2

# 1920s: The Golden Age

The turmoil of the ww1 period (1914–20) had greatly impeded the development of Plast in Western Ukraine. However, it also emphasized the need for the types of skills and values that scouting sought to inculcate in its members. The fact that many Plast scouts rendered outstanding service during the war added noticeably to the growing reputation of this young movement. Therefore, in the interwar years Plast would develop rapidly, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Indeed, during this period the basic features of this organization and its program would take shape, becoming the pillars upon which Ukrainian scouting would rest for generations to come.

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### The Polish authorities and Plast

After ww1, scouting throughout Western Ukraine resumed the rapid growth that was underway before the outbreak of hostilities. Plast's emphasis on character building clearly addressed a need that was widely felt, and scouting's attractive, innovative method of using nature as a context for inculcating the principles of strong character and good citizenship had unquestionably proven to be appealing to youths around the world. Ukrainian scouting would very much reflect this upsurge. Certainly a scout from Britain or the USA would have no trouble (aside from language problems) in recognizing and participating in many Plast activities. Nevertheless, Plast would differ from the scouting movements in well-established, independent democratic states of the West in many crucial ways.



*Polish policemen at Camp Sokil.*



*Celebrating Easter at St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral (Sobor sv. Yura) in Lviv.*

The essence of these differences would be connected to the political conditions in which Ukrainians found themselves in the interwar period. Most of the Ukrainian ethnographic territory (Central, Southern, and Eastern Ukraine) was ruled by the Bolshevik Communist regime, and this precluded any possibility of developing a scouting organization there. Western Ukraine, on the other hand, where Plast was originally founded, was now a part of the newly reconstituted Polish state. Throughout the interwar period, the Polish government would apply an exceedingly repressive policy toward its restive Ukrainian minority. Therefore, unlike scouting in the West—or Polish scouting, which invariably had the support of the state—Ukrainian scouting under Polish rule would be subjected to constant harassment and bureaucratic obstruction. Thus, it would develop as a singular form of scouting, that of a repressed national minority. As such, it could not but become involved, in one way or another and to a greater or lesser degree, with the national liberation struggle of the Ukrainians.

From the outset in 1918, the Polish government had viewed Plast as an undesirable organization at best, and at worst a subversive one. However, since Plast was a scouting organization, and scouting existed in a host of countries around the world, the government's outright suppression of this organization could have had negative international repercussions. Moreover, since Poland not only sanctioned but supported the Polish

scouts, its image might suffer if it prohibited a similar movement among its Ukrainian citizens. Therefore, throughout the 1920s its general approach was neither to ban Plast nor to allow it to register as an independent organization. In effect, it forced Plast to operate in a legal grey zone.

Even before the Poles established control in Eastern Galicia, Plast had attempted, in June 1918, to attain at least a semblance of legality by applying what was already a proven technique: it affiliated itself with the legally recognized Ukrainian Coordinating Society for Child and Youth Care (*Ukrainske koordynatsiine tovarystvo opiky nad ditmy i moloddiu*, or UKTODOM). For much of the 1920s, Plast would continue to function—since the Polish government refused to register it—under the legal sponsorship of this charitable society. But in organizational terms, Plast was really almost totally independent of its sponsor. This semi-legal status made it vulnerable to harassment by Polish government officials, but while higher officials in Warsaw were usually inclined to seek some sort of compromise solution, local authorities in Galicia at the town and county level invariably viewed Plast as a threat to the Polish state and acted accordingly.

As Plast units began to reappear and multiply in the early 1920s, the local authorities in Eastern Galicia attempted to discourage their growth. Repressive measures reached a peak in 1922–23; for example, in March 1922 twelve Plast members in Sokal were expelled from their high school for decorating the graves of fallen Ukrainian soldiers, and their teacher



*Scouts commemorating fallen soldiers—Ukrainian freedom fighters.*



(and scoutmaster) lost his job. In Kolomyia, Ukrainian scouts were briefly incarcerated for participating in a night hike. In the same region, a bitter confrontation festered in Kosiv: when the police arrested members of one troop, another, even larger one appeared; when they closed one location, another was established. Matters reached the ludicrous point where police were stationed in all the premises where the scouts might want to meet.

Police agents and provocateurs were often utilized against teenagers engaged in scouting activities. Official Polish reports about Plast invariably referred to it as a “secret,” “underground,” “clandestine,” or “subversive” organization. A typical report, sent in June 1924 from the governor of Stanyslaviv to the Lviv school board, stated, “We confirm that among these [Plast] youths there is a military organization, although we do not have concrete proof of this.”<sup>1</sup>

The Polish authorities were especially keen to prosecute Plast leaders. In March 1922, when Maria Kekish, a teacher and member of the Plast command, spoke out in defense of Plast, she was accused of espionage and arrested. Released on bail, she chose to emigrate rather than face a Polish court. This incident allowed the Polish press to publish a series of articles decrying Plast as “an espionage organization with military specialists at its helm.”<sup>2</sup> An especially famous case was that of Mykhailo Horbovyi, a teacher and Plast leader in Kosiv. He was first arrested on 29 April 1922, when returning from a Plast council meeting in Lviv. Forced to march 25 kilometres, he was sentenced to eight weeks’ military detention simply for “leadership activities in Plast.” Because he refused to desist, he would be repeatedly arrested throughout the decade. As late as 1927, he was sentenced to six weeks in jail. How Plast continued to function under the strained circumstances is reflected in the fact that some Ukrainian parents even visited Horbovyi in jail in order to enroll their children in the organization. And Horbovyi’s case was only one of many.

Official Polish policy toward Plast vacillated between a hard line and a soft one. For example, on 3 January 1923 the Ternopil governor ordered the police to shut down the organization; one month later, he rescinded the order. In 1924, Plast was banned in the Kalush high school, but when it moved to the People’s Hall (*Narodnyi Dim*), the police did not interfere. In 1926, the Polish authorities agreed to the existence of Plast but insisted that it limit its activities to the schools, where school directors could closely monitor them. They also suggested that Plast join the Polish scouting movement. Since Plast would neither succumb to police harassment nor accept the government-imposed conditions, it had no choice but to function in a situation of constant tension, uncertainty, and confrontation.

Not all of Plast's problems were due to government policies; it also had critics within the Ukrainian community. Myron Fedusevych recalls how in the immediate postwar years, Ukrainian scouts were criticized by some extreme clericalists, who were uneasy about an organization that was unaffiliated with the Church while purporting to teach moral values and harboring "pagan views." However, individual church hierarchs, especially Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, were strong supporters of Plast.

### **Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky**

The Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, Andrei Sheptytsky, developed a close relationship with Plast. The Metropolitan supported the organization politically, and this had a mitigating effect on the extent of Polish harassment. Also, the Metropolitan was the largest financial supporter of Plast; in particular, he donated land in the Carpathian Mountains to Plast. In 1924, he donated land near Pidliute, where the first boy and girl scout and, later, junior scout camps took place. Shortly thereafter he donated land at the top of a mountain and building materials for the famous Sokil camp, romanticized in Plast songs and folklore. In 1929, he donated more land and building materials for a camp in Ostodir. This would be used by Clandestine Plast, operating under various names.

Criticism also came from a diametrically opposed quarter. In the early 1920s, pro-Soviet sympathies were in fact widespread in Western Ukraine, especially among post-secondary students; they looked askance at Plast, which in its very oath bound its members to be loyal to God and fatherland. Thus, almost from the outset Plast faced problems maintaining its independent position and defending its values within its own community. This would actually become more difficult as time went on.

## **Organizational growth**

Despite these exceedingly difficult circumstances, Plast experienced rapid and diversified growth during the postwar decades. Indeed, the 1920s were its "Golden Age." Clearly, the achievements of its members in 1914–18 greatly added to Plast's prestige. It was now no longer viewed as a pedagogical experiment, but rather a proven method of training model Ukrainians. Moreover, the general growth in national consciousness throughout Western Ukraine during this time, and par-



*Camp Sokil in the Carpathian Mountains.*

ticularly the interwar Polish-Ukrainian confrontation, also encouraged the mobilization of youth. Thus, Plast's expansion and the diversification of its programs became ever more attractive to a variety of age groups.

In September 1920, the Supreme Plast Council (*Verkhovna Plastova Rada*, or VPR) revived its existence. Because Tysovsky-DROT was a gymnasium professor and therefore a government employee, he could not take over the helm, so his brother Stefan, a former UHA officer, was chosen to lead the VPR. Although Stefan Tysovsky had practically no experience with scouting before the war, in the few years that he headed Plast, he worked selflessly and effectively in its interest.

Faced with the rapid and spontaneous growth of Plast troops throughout Eastern Galicia, the Plast executive body, the Supreme Plast Command (*Verkhovna Plastova Komanda*, or VPK) realized that it would need to call a general assembly or conference to discuss its growth under the new conditions. At issue was the question whether to call a general assembly of all Plast members or to restrict the meeting to older, more experienced leaders and troop representatives. The VPK decided on the second option, but militant young troop leaders insisted that their voices be heard. On 6 April 1924, about 100 youthful representatives of 29 troops tumultuously joined their elders from the VPK in attending the first postwar general assembly, held in Lviv.



*Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan's bergerie (retreat) at Pidliute, near Osmoloda village, Rozhniativ district, in the Gorgany range of the Carpathian Mountains.*



*Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky and his brother, Archimandrite Klymentii Sheptytsky (to his right), among Plast scouts.*



*Girls' camp at Camp Sokil in the Carpathian Mountains.*

A dramatic situation ensued. The Polish police used the unsanctioned appearance of the young scouts as a pretext to descend on the gathering and arrest or disperse the interlopers. After this brutal intervention, the ВРК and other representatives who had УКТОВОМ sponsor-



*Ivan Chmola and Severyn Levytsky, in front.*

### **Severyn Levytsky**

Severyn Levytsky (“Siryi Lev”), b 6 March 1890 in Shchurovychi, Radekhiv county, into a priestly family, d 30 January 1962 in Buffalo, NY. Levytsky graduated from Lviv University. In 1914–20, he served in the Austrian Army, the Sich Riflemen, and the Ukrainian Galician Army. During the interwar period, he taught at a teachers’ college in Lviv. First elected to the Plast leadership in 1914, he headed the ВРК in 1924–34. After Plast was banned, he worked to promote youth activism by various means. In 1947, at the Plast jamboree in Mittenwald, he was elected Chief Scout, a position that he retained until his death. Levytsky’s early history of Plast, *Ukraïns’kyi plastovyi ulad, 1911–45*, was published posthumously in 1967.

Levytsky was an organizer and reformer of Plast, especially in the 1920s. He strove to broaden its social base by attracting rural and working-class youth. Levytsky considered Plast to be a social organization that, while following the scouting method, strove to train youth for the Ukrainian national liberation struggle. He continually stressed the need for Plast to remain independent of political, religious, and ideological organizations. For many, Levytsky was the principal navigator of the ship called *Plast*.

ship were left to continue their deliberations. Regaining their composure, they went on to introduce a series of organizational reforms that ushered in a new era in Plast history.

First and foremost, the 1924 assembly concentrated on establishing an effective central leadership. It formed a new VPR as a consultative and advisory body, and appointed DROT to head it. Meanwhile, executive powers were vested in the VPK, which was led by Severyn Levytsky—who would be named Chief Scout for Plast in 1947—and in a group of young students who had been raised throughout their scouting careers in Plast. Because political circumstances soon forced most of his young colleagues on the VPK to go abroad to continue their studies, Levytsky, who clearly possessed organizational talent, had to push through many of the ensuing reforms himself. It was at this point that Levytsky—known by his pseudonym *Siryi Lev* (Grey Lion)—emerged as a key figure in the organization.

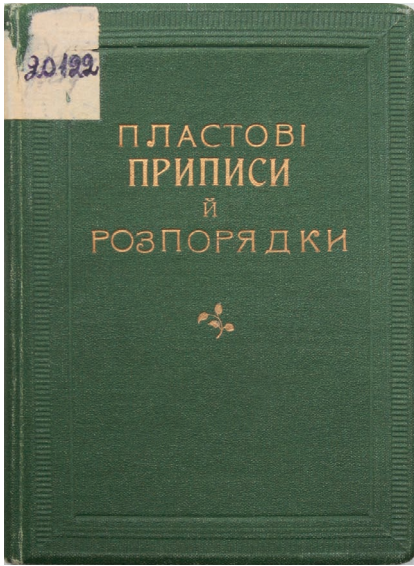
The VPK was subdivided into organizational, leadership training, economic, and press sectors (*referaty*). A secretariat handled the burgeoning correspondence with the districts. The main function of the central office in Lviv was to supervise, coordinate, and direct Plast activities. It also took on the responsibility of defending Plast units from harassment by the Polish authorities. But while forming a more effective central office, Levytsky was careful not to infringe on the freedom and flexibility of local units. Indeed, the VPK encouraged local initiatives.

Soon after the 1924 assembly, a major reorganization occurred at the local level. To make local troops easier to manage, the VPK abolished the large regiments (*polky*), which had often consisted of several hundred members, and replaced them with smaller, more manageable troops. A



*Lviv leaders, 1924.*





*Plastovi pryypysy i rozporiadky (Plast Rules and Directives, Lviv 1924).*

troop was to comprise up to about 50 members between ages of 14 and 18, who were subdivided into 3–7 patrols. It elected its own leaders, which consisted of a troop leader, arbiter, secretary, and treasurer. Each troop also selected a patron—a historical figure with whom its members could identify—that the troop would be named for. An older scout, someone who was over twenty and had passed all the badge levels, was appointed as scoutmaster (*zviazkovyi*). It was his or her function to coordinate activities of the troop with the local Plast branch (*stanytsia*) and with the central office.

Each troop also chose an older, respected member of the community to be its sponsor (*opikun*), to provide

it with some adult supervision and act as its spokesperson before government authorities and community institutions. By late 1927, there were 95 scoutmasters and troop sponsors in Eastern Galicia, of whom 42 were older scouts (mostly post-secondary students) and 28 were teachers. This new organizational format soon proved that it could stand the test of time.

Regional Plast structures were also revamped and strengthened. The prewar territorial delineation based on eleven cities was modified into six districts: (1) a central district based in Lviv (later split into Lviv-city and Lviv-district); (2) the Highland (*Verkhovyna*) district, which included Stryi and, later, Drohobych; (3) the Dniester district, centered in Stanyslaviv (Ivano-Frankivsk); (4) the Podil district, which encompassed Berezhany and, later, Ternopil; (5) the Hutsul district, based in Kolomyia; and (6) the Border district, with Peremyshl as its center. Each of these districts chose its own advisory council (OPR) and executive committee (OPK). These regional bodies, which included Plast activists and a representative of УКТОВОМ, became support units of the central office in Lviv. This new central and regional administrative structure involved about 30 people, all volunteers. In terms of professional background, about 65% were teachers and students; the rest were mostly lawyers, engineers, and priests.



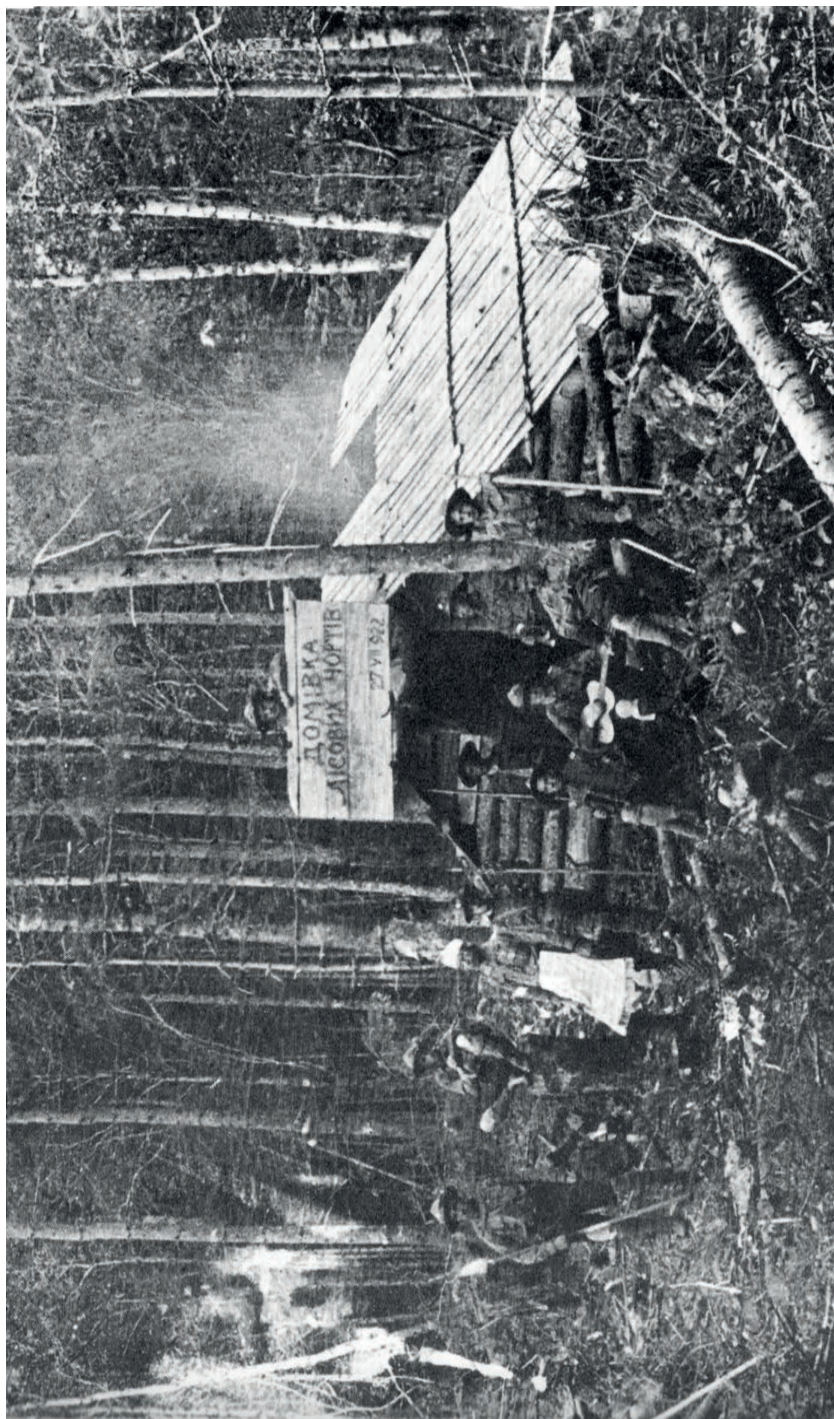
*Plast assembly in Lviv, 1927.*

A key decision regarding a growth strategy for the organization was taken at the third general Plast assembly, which was held on 25–26 December 1927. The Plast leadership decided that their organization should emphasize not so much quantitative growth as qualitative development. This meant that henceforth the emphasis would be placed on “a deeper focus on Plast character-building” and on “internal consolidation of the organization,” rather than increasing membership numbers. While this would slow the numerical growth of the organization, it would increase the commitment to Plast of its existing members.

## **Age-group differentiation—the Plast divisions**

### *Rover-rank scout division (ulad starshykh plastuniv, or USP)*

In the 1920s the appeal of scouting began to reach beyond its original target group, that of 12–17-year-old boys. This was reflected in an extremely important development in Plast: namely, the emergence and organization of a new division, the 18–25-year-old so-called “rover-rank scouts” (*starshi plastuny*). This age group was definitely beyond the scope of scouting as envisioned by Lord Baden-Powell. While British scouting did have the Rover Scouts (“Scouters” is the term used in the US), these were considered to be individuals who had completed their scouting careers. If they wished to remain involved, they could do so primarily as scoutmasters. In the Ukrainian case, the rover-rank scouts or *starshi plas-*



*A camp of the Plast fraternity Lisovi Chorty, 1922.*

*tuny* were those who had completed their regular scouting career and wished to continue it. They would do so on another, more responsible and innovative level. Indeed, the rover-rank Plast scouts would come to believe that they were not only very much a component of Plast but even a central and leading part of it. The crucial role of this division in Plast would make it quite unique among scouting movements around the world.

Who were these first rover-rank scouts in Plast? Basically, they were members of the first generation that had grown up as scouts in Plast and had developed a strong sense of loyalty to it and its values. They wished to continue to be actively involved in scouting, in ways yet to be identified and that were appropriate to their age. Enamoured of the romanticism associated with life in nature, they did not wish to give it up. Certainly, the desire to maintain the friendships that had developed over years of scouting was also key motive for becoming rover-rank scouts in Plast. Some, whose scouting careers had been interrupted by military service, wished to pick up where they had left off. Many were influenced by the feeling that they were now responsible for improving and guiding the organization which had had such a positive impact on their lives. In any case, with the emergence of the rover-rank scouts, Plast would acquire a growing cadre of active supporters and trained leaders that it had itself cultivated.

Apparently, the first mention of creating a special division of what were originally called “honorary scouts” appeared in the summer of 1922, when Mykhailo Pezhansky introduced the idea during an extended hike in the Carpathians of a group of adult scouts who called themselves *Lis-ovi Chorty* (Forest Devils). The city of Stanyslaviv served as an early base for these older scouts, and in 1922 they held meetings there. In January 1923, Iu. Studynsky, Z. Zalutsky, and A. Okhrymovych called a meeting of the “honorary scouts” in Lviv, and resolved to officially establish a separate division in Plast. On 23 April 1924 a conference of “honorary scouts,” that is, those who had completed high school, was held in Lviv.

It attracted 52 delegates and reached a number of important decisions. It was agreed that members of the division would have to be 18 or older in age, they would have to swear to uphold Plast directives, and that non-scouts could be enrolled only if they obtained recommendations from two scouts. The new division elected its own leaders, and decided that its members should not be called “honorary scouts” but rather *starshi plastuny* (older scouts)—what in Britain are called Rover Scouts and in the USA are Scouters (hereinafter—*rover-rank scouts*).

During the next three years, this division began to evolve ever more concrete and diverse forms. Its development was complicated by



*Assembly of Lisovi Chorty fraternity members at St. George's Cathedral in Lviv before the consecration of their banner, 1929.*

the fact that there were no analogous units in other scouting movements that could serve as models. This led to long discussions about what the nature of this division of adult scouts should be. Some proposed that it be a non-structured group, a kind of discussion club, which would abandon uniforms, skills badges, and camps and concentrate rather on promoting a new, scouting-based worldview. Others believed that it should prepare recruits for the struggle for national liberation. But at conferences held in Stanyslaviv and Lviv in 1924, neither alternative was accepted. Instead the rover-rank scouts were defined as those with concrete experience and expertise, who should be available as resources for Plast. Concretely, this meant that such functions as instructors, coordinators, or sponsors would become the primary responsibility of those older scouts. Thus, the scouts were to ensure that the organization could rely only on its own human resources. These conferences also identified the rover-rank scouts as the division in Plast best suited to develop ideological guidelines and development strategies.

Originally it was envisioned that the Plast rover-rank scouts would be organized in small groups or patrols. But as ever more scouts graduated into the ranks of this division, troops akin to fraternities were formed. These fraternities (and, later, sororities) comprised like-minded, close-knit young friends who had grown up together in Plast and shared its values and goals. In effect, these troops made Plast friends into lifelong

friends. Each fraternity and sorority coalesced in distinct style around a particular form of scouting, be it hiking, mountain climbing or sea scouting. Taken as whole, they would inject dynamism, an innovative spirit and esprit de corps that would greatly invigorate and enrich the organization as a whole. Indeed, some believed that these young adult scouts were really the core of the entire organization.

The third (and arguably most famous) Plast rover-rank fraternity was the *Lisovi Chorty*. Founded in 1922, they included some of the earliest and most active alumni of Plast's boy scout division. Although they cultivated a spirit of adventure, clever mischief, and a devil-may-care attitude, they also stressed a commitment to constructive and disciplined work on behalf of Plast. Soon other fraternities appeared. In 1922, female scouts founded the *Spartanky* (Women of Sparta) sorority. In 1925 another famous fraternity, *Chervona Kalyna* (Red Viburnum), came on the scene, based primarily in Stryi. And in 1927, the new fraternities *Orden Zaliznoi Ostrohy* (Order of the Iron Host) and *Chornomortsi* (Black Sea Sailors) appeared. Since they were university students, they had an impact not only on Plast but also on the post-secondary student movement and even on other community organizations. It is probably not an exaggeration to state that this Plast division of older scouts included the elite of Galician youth and young adults, especially at the universities. Statistics confirm the rapid growth of this division. In 1924 there were only 3 fraternities, numbering 51 members all together. By 1927 the number



*Biking.*

had risen to 17 fraternities and sororities, with a total of 349 members, and by 1930 there were 33 with 435 members, respectively, constituting roughly 7–8% of the entire Plast membership.

*Junior scout division (ulad plastovoho novatstva, or UPN)*

The formation of the rover-rank division encouraged the emergence of another, younger-age division in Plast, the junior scouts (cub scouts and brownies). There are indications that as early as 1914 there was an attempt to organize children aged 8–12 into a loose affiliation with Plast: that year, a group of 8–10-year-old pupils at the Hrinchenko School in Lviv were outfitted with Plast uniforms and played “soldiers” (much to the disapproval of DROT), under the guidance of Sokil counselors. They even participated in the great Sokil-Sich parade in 28 June 1914. After the war, serious systematic efforts commenced within Plast to create a junior scout division. Models were easily available, since British scouting already had its wolf cubs and juniors, and DROT also knew about analogous groups in the Austrian scouting movement. By 1923, a number of Plast boy scout troops had their own sub-divisions of junior scouts.

At the first conference of the Plast junior scout division, held on 14 April 1924 in Lviv, a separate administration, led by Savina Sydorovych, was created for them. In October, a guide was published for the *vovchyky* (little wolves) and *lysytsi* (vixens) that contained a program of physical and moral education, consisting of seven badges. The boys and girls were grouped into separate dens of up to 14 members, first led by regular boy and girl scouts who had completed 2–3 weeks of training and, in time, by rover-rank leaders. At a conference of junior boy and girl scout leaders in February 1928, organized by Ivan Klishch, more refinements were introduced, including the stipulation that only rover-rank scouts could be den chiefs. A major impetus to attracting children to this youngest Plast division was the appearance in 1928 of two booklets written by Leonid Bachynsky, *Hotuis!* and *Vovcheniata i lysychky*, published in Transcarpathia.

At the outset, the junior scout division grew rapidly. In 1927 it had 13 packs and a number of independent dens. The largest concentrations of junior scouts were in that hotbed of Plast activity, Stryi, where 147 boys and girls were enrolled, and in Lviv, with 130; the total for all of Galicia was 788. By 1928 a decline had set in and membership sank to 400. This was primarily due to two factors: firstly, many from this division had grown and moved up into the ranks of the boy and girl scout division; and secondly, the junior scouts were essentially bereft, lacking qualified leaders.



Пластуні і пластунки полку ім. П. Орлика української гімназії в Рогатині, 1920-і рр.

*Plast boys and girls of the Orlyk group in Rohatyn town, 1920s.*

### *Boy and girl scout division (ulad plastovoho yunatstva, or UPU)*

As divisions were created for the Rover-rank and junior scouts, the need arose to solidify a distinct entity for the original and largest segment of the organization, the boy and girl scouts aged 14–17. Consequently, in 1927 the ВРК formally announced the formation of the boy and girl scout division (*yunatstvo*). Because it was the most central and numerous part of Plast, this division remained under the direct supervision of the ВРК, and its problems and concerns were essentially those of Plast as a whole.

The growth in numbers of the Plast boy and girl scouts was most rapid between 1924 and 1927. During this period, the number of troops increased from 35 to 78, while the total number of scouts climbed from 1,750 to 4,083; about 70% were boys. The largest concentration of boy and girl scouts was in the *Verkhovyna* district—Stryi, Drohobych, and Sambir.

### *Scout-seniors division (ulad plastovoho senioratu, or UPS)*

The final step in building Plast's organizational structure was to create a division for its oldest members, that is, those over 25.<sup>1</sup> It was a logical development: if scouting was meant to develop lifelong values, then it should, many believed, also provide a place for those who practiced them throughout their entire lives. Creating a scout-seniors division came easily, for the matter had already been discussed often. Nevertheless, it was January 1930 when the oldest activists, including the “founding fathers” of the

1. Subsequently raised several times, and currently at 33–35 years, depending on the country.



organization, assembled in Lviv and formed the first scout-seniors fraternity (co-ed), named after DROT and led by Chmola. Thus was established the fourth and final division in Plast—the *seniorat*. In July of that year they organized their first camp, on Mount Sokil near the village of Pidliute, in the Carpathian Mountains; about 40 scout-seniors attended.

With the establishment of the scout-seniors division, Plast was in a position to accept all age groups into its ranks. Its membership now formed a complete cycle, encompassing children, youths, young adults, and older adults.

## **Broadening the social base**

### *Women in Plast*

From the outset, the scouting movement was also attractive and appealing to girls. Consequently, in England, a separate scouting organization, the Girl Guides, was founded in 1910. Ukrainian scouting, however, did not follow the English model, and instead of creating a separate female scouting organization, it combined both girls and boys in Plast, within a single organization.

The first girl scout troop appeared in 1911, at about the same time as the first boys' troops. Founded by Olena Stepanivna (Dashkevych) at the Basilian Gymnasium for Girls in Lviv—the school would remain a center of female scouting for decades—the troop was named after Marta Boretska. Another troop, named after Anastasia Slutska, was founded in Peremyshl; these two remained the only girls' troops until the war, and interrupted their activity during the conflict. An upsurge in female involvement in Plast came in the early 1920s. By 1920, the two aforementioned girls' troops were reconstituted, and a number of female activists came forth, most notably Kekelija (Cecilia) "Tsiopa" Palijiw, a teacher of physical education in Peremyshl. In Lviv, Myron Fedusevych at the Basilian Gymnasium helped to promote the creation of girls' troops in Plast.

In 1922 a rally took place in Lviv for interested girl scouts, and soon afterwards girls' troops appeared in almost all the branches where Plast was active. By the late 1920s, girls accounted for about 30% of the organization's membership. Often their troops were supported by women's organizations, such as *Soiuz Ukraïnok*.

The rapid rise in the number of female members in Plast did raise a new set of issues. Among them was the question of establishing equal-



*Girls with scout staves, 1927. Baden Powell regarded the hiking staff to be an indispensable element of scouting equipage.*

ity and uniformity in the treatment of boys and girls. Another issue was how to adapt the example of the English Girl Guides to the Ukrainian environment and the mentality of Ukrainian women. As described above, already a different approach had been taken in combining the girl and boy scouts into single divisions in Plast (at all levels—junior, regular, and rover-rank scouts, as well as the scout-seniors). This was a progressive development as compared to the situation in Britain. Although these issues would be discussed periodically, no satisfactory conclusions would be reached for years to come.

### *Scouting in rural districts—“Selo-Plast”*

From the outset, Plast recruited its members almost exclusively from high schools in cities and towns. However, during that time, the vast majority of Ukrainian youth lived in villages and did not attend such schools. Initially these children had little contact with scouting, and it was therefore only a matter of time before the Plast leadership, or at least some young Plast activists, began to turn their attention to rural youth.

One of the earliest formations of *Selo-Plast* included two scout patrols organized by V. Hirniak in Yamnytsi, near Stanyslaviv, in the summer



*The rover-rank and scout-senior sorority Ti, shcho hrebli rvut, with Tsiopa Palijiw (third from left).*

of 1922. Soon afterwards, about 15 village boys took the Plast Oath and became a part of the Stanyslaviv troop. This would initially be the typical pattern: scouting spread from towns with active Plast troops to nearby villages, where satellite units were formed. By 1923, however, the first independent village scout troop appeared in the village of Pavelchi. In 1925 Plast leaders frequently raised the issue of focusing on rural youth, including in the press, and a number of guidelines were developed on the best approach to popularizing *Selo-Plast*. As a result, in the next several years, seven large rural troops were formed, numbering 60 to 110 members each, as well as about ten smaller groups of scouts.

By 1927, about 26% of Plast members were rural (overall, about 80% of the Ukrainian population was rural). Most were in the villages Synevidsko Vyzhne, Sadzhava, Uhornyky, and Dobrivliany. Perhaps the most outstanding *Selo-Plast* unit was based in the village of Pavelchi. It was led by Mykola Tretiak, and in 1927 it had 57 members divided into six patrols. This troop engaged in an unusually broad spectrum of activities: gymnastics, soccer, gardening, theater, stamp-collecting, book binding, and carpentry. Not only was the troop active in gathering funds (for educational organizations and the purchase of a headquarters building for Plast in Lviv), it was also the only unit in *Selo-Plast* that managed, with the help of the community, to construct its own premises.

Although Plast managed to secure a foothold in the rural districts, progress there was slow. The essence of the problem was that scouting was

designed for urban high school youth who had a considerable measure of free time. Village youths rarely went to school and invariably worked all day long on the family farms. Their interests tended to be quite different from those of urban youth. Nature was not as fascinating for them, and they certainly knew well skills such as tying knots, using axes, or cooking on an open fire. Instead, what they wanted from Plast was what they could not receive for lack of schooling: gymnastics, sports, and military drills (especially attractive for the village boys), as well as cultural activities such as theater groups and music ensembles. While Plast could offer some of these activities, they were clearly not core elements in its program. Moreover, given the more prevalent traditionalism of rural Ukrainians, girls had neither the time nor the inclination to join a scouting organization. Consequently, most rural youth—and therefore, the majority of Western Ukrainian boys and girls—would remain beyond the reach of scouting.

### *Plast and the working class*

Another socioeconomic segment of Ukrainian youth that Plast had difficulty in attracting was the urban working-class youth. To a large extent, it comprised rural boys who came to work in the city, usually for miserable wages and in terrible conditions. It also included the children of the (invariably) impoverished working class and of the somewhat better off tradesmen. For most of the 1920s, the Plast leadership paid little atten-



*Plast orchestra in the town of Berezhany.*

tion to these youths. Yet they were the ones who, perhaps more than any others, needed an organization that might raise their morale. Frequently lacking parental guidance, exploited, and exposed to alcoholism and crime, such youths could have benefitted greatly from what scouting had to offer. However, only a few Plast activists worked among them. A notable example was the aforementioned Mykhailo Horbovyi in Kosiv. Another was the poet Vasyl Karkhut, a noted theoretician of scouting; he wrote the book *Druha i tretia proba plastuna* (Second and Third Scout Ranks, 1928), which contained a detailed program for organizing urban working-class youth. Their efforts did bear some fruit, and a number of non-school-based scout troops were formed in Lviv, Stanyslaviv, and other cities. Often these troops were affiliated with guilds or other trade organizations. But like the rural scouts, they never became a major component of Plast. Indeed, in 1927, less than 1% of its membership came from the proletariat.

### *The parents' auxiliary—Plast-pryiat*

In time, Plast attracted a circle of adults—parents of members, pedagogues, and community activists—who wished to provide “comprehensive material and moral support and sponsorship for members of Plast.” On 9 March 1930, these individuals gathered in Lviv and formed, as a separate sector of УКОДОМ, the Society of Friends of Plast—or, as it came to be called, *Plast-pryiat*. The main function of this support group was to help Plast assemble the funds needed to conduct its program, usually by means of fundraising events.

One of the key problems that parents and friends of Plast helped to address, even before they were formally constituted as an auxiliary, was finding facilities for meetings and camps. This was a burdensome issue in every area of Plast activity, as rental fees paid to community organizations caused a considerable strain on its limited financial resources. The problem was especially acute in Lviv, where the central office was located. In the early 1920s, Plast had its premises in the Stauropegion Institute. However, the board of this institute consisted of anti-Ukrainian Russophiles, who not only looked askance at patriotic Ukrainian youth but even tried to establish a rival scouting organization. Therefore, in 1925 Plast and future *Plast-pryiat* members began a campaign to raise funds for its own building. Matters moved slowly until February 1930, when Plast was evicted from the Stauropegion Institute. Public condemnation of this action encouraged many adults to join *Plast-pryiat* and rejuvenate the funding drive. It appeared that the drive would soon reach its goal when, in the summer of 1930, new disasters confronted the organization.



*Pysanyi Kamin Plast camp in the Carpathian Mountains, 1924.*



*Camping in the Carpathian Mountains. Note: Scouting's attractive, innovative method of using nature as a context for building strong character and good citizens had proven itself as being unquestionably appealing, but these camps offered another advantage: they served as convenient places where Plast leaders could gather, reestablish contacts, and plan their activities without police interference.*

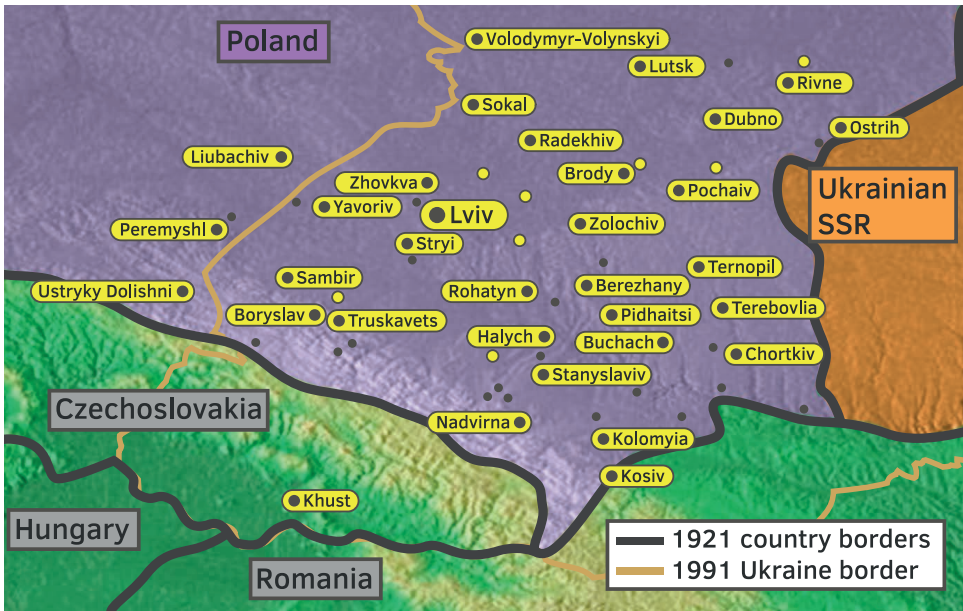
## Statistics

The most rapid period of Plast growth was from 1924, following the Supreme Plast Council, to 1927, when more emphasis was placed on the program quality and less on numerical growth.

	Membership in Plast	Number of boy and girl scout troops
1924	1,750	35
1927	4,083	78
1930	~ 6,000	93 (plus 20 associate-level troops)
	By division (age category)	
1930	70% boy and girl scouts (of which about 30% were girls)	

These statistics might create a false impression that the growth of Plast in the 1920s was a steady, unbroken process. In fact, it was irregular, and although there was growth overall, there were also contained declines and regressions. As some troops were formed, others disintegrated, and as new members entered the ranks of the organization, others left. For example, 80 boy and girl scouts left Plast in 1926, and 65 left in 1927; the most common reason was not wishing to continue on with scouting after reaching the age of 17. Those younger than 17 were much less likely to leave. The following were some of the reasons cited in the resignation notices: lack of time, pressure from school authorities, poor grades, inability or unwillingness to adhere to the Plast code of behavior, other interests, and poor health. Lack of funds was rarely, if ever, given as a reason, since Plast, and especially fellow scouts, made every effort to help any scout in financial need. Finally, a few of the resignations reflected disillusionment with the declining idealism of their colleagues, or the opinion that Plast was not the most effective way to build a new, independent Ukraine.

During the interwar period, Plast spread to every area where Ukrainians lived in large numbers (except, of course, Soviet Ukraine, where it was banned). Because the political, cultural, and socio-economic conditions varied greatly in every one of these areas, Plast also developed distinct characteristics in every new environment. Thus, the key challenge was to retain the core idea while adapting to local conditions.



*Plast dispersion in Polish-ruled Eastern Galicia, 1920s. Note: unattributed yellow dots represent additional towns, and charcoal dots represent additional villages.*

## Transcarpathia

Compared to Eastern Galicia, surprisingly dynamic growth of Plast took place in Transcarpathia. There, conditions for the growth of a Ukrainian scouting movement were much more advantageous than elsewhere. A key factor was that during the interwar period Transcarpathia was part of Czechoslovakia, the most democratic country in Eastern Europe. Fortunately, it had a relatively liberal policy towards its national minorities.

As far as the Ukrainians in Transcarpathia (or *Rusyns* ‘Ruthenians’, as they called themselves), were concerned, they were even more rural and village-based than their brethren in Eastern Galicia. This meant that Plast attracted not only a tiny number of urban youth, or those who studied in towns, but it also spread among the rural youth. Supporting this development was the generally benevolent attitude of the domestic, Czech-dominated scouting movement. Furthermore, the presence in Transcarpathia of a large number of Ukrainian political émigrés, both from Eastern Ukraine and Eastern Galicia, also encouraged Transcarpathian youths to join Plast. And, in time, native-born Transcarpathian Plast leaders arose to lead the relatively large, well-organized Ukrainian scouting movement. (Further details about the Transcarpathian Plast are provided in chapter 4).



## **Volhynia**

A large region in Northwestern Ukraine, inhabited by about 2 million people, Volhynia had been a part of the Russian Empire up to 1917. In 1921, it came under Polish rule, along with Galicia. Like other ethnic Ukrainian regions, it was overwhelmingly agrarian, and much of the land was owned by Poles. The vast majority of the largely Ukrainian peasants was poor and uneducated; Ukrainian organizations were practically non-existent, and national consciousness was weak. In many ways, Polish policies concerning the mostly Orthodox Ukrainians were even more repressive in Volhynia than in neighbouring Galicia.

Under these circumstances, Plast had little chance to develop normally. As in Galicia, the Polish authorities refused to recognize the organization as a legal entity. Therefore, the pioneers of Ukrainian scouting in Volhynia had to find a legally constituted organization that would serve as a “cover” for Plast. The educational society Prosvita took on this role, and throughout the 1920s the Plast groups that emerged in Volhynia functioned as sub-sections of local “Prosvitas.” In September 1922, Prosvita made a concerted effort to expand its local chapters, and part of this organizational drive included founding Plast units in the new localities. The first Plast unit in Volhynia, led by O. Dmytrychenko, appeared in September 1922 in Ostrih. It received the necessary literature from Ukrainian scouts in Prague, and soon had about 60 members. Others appeared as part of the Prosvita chapters in Zdolbuniv, Kovel, Volodymyr-Volynskyy, Radyvyliv, Pochaiv, and Lutsk. The highest concentration of Plast members was in Rivne, where pupils of the local Ukrainian gymnasium were formed into two quasi-legal units. Plast in this region was organized and led by S. Semeniuk, who suffered repeated persecution by Polish authorities for his leadership and commitment to Ukrainian scouting. Like Semeniuk, other organizers of Plast units in Volhynia were invariably members of Prosvita, and the members they attracted were usually inhabitants of the towns.

An exception to the rule was the town of Oleksandriia. There, in the fall of 1923, the older pupils in a primary school took the initiative in organizing a Plast patrol. When they were informed that it would be allowed to exist only if a local Prosvita chapter sponsored it, the youths went on to establish a chapter of that educational society in their town.

By the fall of 1924, Plast in Volhynia had about 280 members. This led the vPK in Lviv to assign two experienced Galician scout-seniors, B. Kravtsiv and S. Okhrymovych, to aid the Volhynians in their organizational efforts. These two were soon arrested by the Polish police. Nonetheless,

Lviv continued to dispatch experienced Plast leaders to Volhynia, among them V. Ostapovych and V. Yaniv, who acted as advisors and organizers in 1926. Lviv also sent the necessary literature and instructional materials.

By the mid-1920s, Plast membership in Volhynia reached its high point, with approximately 500 members (some argue that the figure was smaller). Not only were these numbers unimpressive, but the organization remained rather one-dimensional: its members were almost exclusively boy scouts, with no junior or rover-rank scouts and few females. Certainly, a major problem was the repressive policies of the Polish authorities. But the lack of experienced leaders and an appropriate social base also contributed to the stunted growth of the organization. Moreover, within the Ukrainian community, especially in the villages, there were strong pro-Soviet tendencies. These also discouraged youths from joining what was perceived as a “bourgeois” organization. Thus, when in 1928 the Polish authorities decided to ban Plast, along with other Ukrainian organizations, they encountered little resistance in Volhynia.

## Bukovyna

Ukrainian scouting in Bukovyna, which had a population of about half a million, had a promising start in the years before 1914, when the region was a province of the relatively liberal Habsburg empire. But after the collapse of Austrian rule in 1918, Bukovyna was incorporated into Romania, a country that implemented extremely repressive policies towards its national minorities. This would mean that attempts to reestablish Plast after the hiatus of the war years would encounter major barriers.



*Kitsman, Bukovyna, 1933.*

An attempt was made in the fall of 1921 to establish a Plast unit in Chernivtsi, but it failed because of a government ban on all Ukrainian organizations. When these restrictions were eased in 1928, some progress was possible. The initiative was taken by university students, who were the most dynamic and best organized element in Ukrainian society in Bukovyna. In the summer of that year, students in Chernivtsi held lengthy discussions about the need to renew Plast. They obtained, with some difficulty, instructional materials from Galicia, secretly met with Galician colleagues on the Polish-Romanian border, and prepared a detailed work plan.

In January 1929 a series of articles appeared in *Chas*, the major Ukrainian newspaper in Bukovyna. Soon afterwards, the *Chornomore* (Black Sea) student fraternity established a 15-member Plast unit; its most active members were B. Siretsky, who became the leader of the Bukovynian scouts, L. Husar, and V. Antonets. In the summer of 1930, these scouts participated in the Plast camp at the *Pysanyi Kamin* mountain resort in Galicia. Inspired by the experience, Siretsky and his friends resolved to bring high-school students into their organization, and in the spring of 1931 they established a 30-member troop at the Chernivtsi Gymnasium, which also created a junior scout division. But expansion in the high schools was limited, mainly because of the lack of scout leaders and the quasi-legal status of Plast. Moreover, the contacts with Galicia that could have provided experienced leaders became ever more difficult.

As a result, the few Plast units that did exist in Bukovyna in the early 1930s consisted primarily of university students. In May 1931 they formed a 70-member troop that was first called «Oleksa Dovbush» and then «Verkhovyntsi». Since they were older and well-educated, these scouts quickly mastered the theoretical and practical aspects of scouting. They had good opportunities to practice their skills in the nearby Carpathian Mountains. However, internal conflicts soon fractured this core group: about 20 female members left the troop and formed a rover-rank sorority called *Yasni Zori* (Bright Stars), while the remaining male members re-organized themselves into the Third Ivan Mazepa fraternity. It was this group that remained the core of Plast in Bukovyna during the interwar period.

Although Chernivtsi had a fairly active Plast group, its problem was demographic: the vast majority of its members were university students, and little effort was made to attract younger members of high-school age. Therefore, in 1934 when the university students completed their education and were either called up for military service or sought employment in other cities, the core group of Plast members began to

disintegrate. Rather than compromise the image of Plast by trying to maintain a rag-tag organization, the remaining members decided to disband. In 1937, an effort was made to renew Plast in the region, but it failed.

## Plast in emigration

The failure to establish an independent Ukrainian state in 1917–20 forced many Ukrainians to leave their homeland. Most were young soldiers in the Ukrainian National Army. Others were members of the various Ukrainian national governments, adherents of Ukrainian political parties, and members of the nationally conscious Ukrainian intelligentsia. Although they eventually scattered throughout Europe and North America, many were first concentrated in Czechoslovakia, which offered them hospitality and even some financial support. Among these émigrés, the idea of creating new, more progressive type of Ukrainian persona was appealing. Consequently some young Ukrainians were drawn to scouting and to Plast. They organized a new, émigré variant of Ukrainian scouting and developed contacts with Plast in both Transcarpathia and Eastern Galicia. This émigré variant of Ukrainian scouting will be discussed in a separate chapter.

\* \* \*

The 1920s are often called the Golden Age of Plast. Despite a negative attitude and frequent interference from the Polish government, Plast in Galicia became a leading youth organization among Ukrainians. Although it emphasized the qualitative aspects of boys' individual development, it also made an effort to spread its message among girls and young women, rural youth, and young working-class Ukrainians. The message was clearly attractive to many, especially to the children of the urban Ukrainian intelligentsia.

Equally striking were the varied environments in which Plast achieved notable successes. It established itself, at least temporarily, in Volhynia, despite the largely rural regions in which the vast majority of Ukrainians lived there. It had very notable success in Transcarpathia, which, being a part of the Czechoslovak state, was significantly more democratic than interwar Poland. Indeed, in Transcarpathia the scouting organization not only fostered admirable individuals but also nationally conscious Ukrainians—no mean feat in the ethnically con-

fused and underdeveloped context of that region. Furthermore, Plast appealed to the largely Eastern Ukrainian émigrés based in Prague, and moved with them to many Eastern and Western European cities. And it also had notable success among the Ukrainian immigrants and émigrés in France.

Alongside these were also disappointments. During this period Plast had only a temporary existence in Bukovyna and in Canada and USA, where short-lived Plast groups sprang up, but where the appeal of American and Canadian scouting was too strong for Plast to compete. Nonetheless, in the 1920s Plast proved that no matter how different the environment in which they lived, Ukrainian scouting invariably appealed to the younger generation of Ukrainians.

Notes:

1. Khobzei, P. 'Taimnyi universytet u L'vovi,' *Ukraina: Nauka i kul'tura* (Kyiv) 1991, no. 25, p. 56
2. Prosvita. *Kalendar 1936 r.* (Lviv: Zoloty Kolos 1935), p. 39

**Приймається передплата**  
на новий педагогічно-ідеологічний часопис

## ПЛАСТОВИЙ ШЛЯХ

Виходитиме неперіодичними випусками 5 разів в рік, в об'ємі по 1—2 аркушеві друку. Ті, що зложать відразу щорічну передплату одержать даром Пластовий Календарець на рік 1930, що містить багатий пластовий матеріял (116 ст.).

Обговорюватиме справи нинішнього виховання молоді в нас і за границею, зокрема подаватиме й висловуватиме головні й підставові напрями пластової ідеології й виховання.

Подаватиме інформації з поля методики пластової праці, обговорюватиме справи пластово-організаційні й приносить вісті з життя цілого Укр. Пластового Уряду й всіх інших пластових організацій цілого світа. Обговорюватиме пл. книжки й часописи, міститиме пл. бібліографію.

Заявуватиме Укр. Пласт тісно з усенароднім українським життям, із його минулим і майбутнім, розглядючи укр. пластове життя на тлі життя цілого Українського Народу та його ідейних поривів до кращого завтра.

Приносить свою увагу економічному дивиченню Укр. Народу, уважаючи економічну силу як одну із конечних предумов гарного успіху в життєво-одичинстві і щільні народів і створення життя радісного, здорового пласту, світобуду.

Міститиме розпорядки, прикази, інструкції та інформації Верховної Пластової Команди, яка з рамени Укр. Тов. Охорони Дітей проводить працю в Укр. ПЛ. Уряді.

Передплата вносить: річно 3 зл., піврічно 1'50 зл., одно число коштує 60 сот.

Адреса Редакції й Адміністрації: Львів, Шашневича 5.

Видат: Кооператив ПЛАСТ у Львові, вулиця Шашневича 5. — Редактор: Василь Шашневич редактор: Іван А. Орлик. Друкарня СБ. Високий і Жовтий.

# ПЛАСТОВИЙ ШЛЯХ

*Plastovyi shliakh (The Scouting Path), a magazine dealing with pedagogy and ideology, published in Lviv (this issue probably from 1929 or 1930).*

## Chapter 3

# 1930s: Repression and persistence

During the 1930s, Plast's ability to survive and adapt was severely tested. Exemplifying the unenviable position held by Ukrainians during the interwar period, Plast was exposed to all the trials and tribulations of a stateless people. In Galicia, Plast would be banned by the Polish government in the diaspora it would face the unprecedented challenge of representing Ukrainian scouting internationally while attempting to stave off the eroding influences of assimilation. In Transcarpathia, Plast would become one of the primary factors in the Ukrainianization of a population that previously had had little sense of its national identity. Taking on a variety of forms and functions, Plast would struggle to preserve its basic principles and organizational integrity. How Plast dealt with these challenges would have a major impact on its later history.

\* \* \*

In many ways, the growth of Plast in Western Ukraine had been similar to the rapid development of scouting throughout Europe. Starting in the second decade of its existence, however, there was a crucial difference in the Ukrainian case. Almost everywhere else, national scouting organizations were viewed positively and even supported, by their governments, which usually considered them to be training grounds in good citizenship and patriotism. As an example, the Polish scouting movement certainly benefitted greatly from its government's encouraging attitudes and policies. But from the point of view of the Polish government and society in Eastern Galicia, Ukrainian scouting, which emphasized Ukrainian patriotism, was clearly a subversive movement, one that by definition was at odds with everything that Poland stood for. Consequently, Plast was a rare case in which the government considered a scouting movement to be a threat rather than a benefit. The Polish occupiers repeatedly implemented measures that would impede its growth. Therefore, in the interwar period, when both Polish and Ukrainian nationalism became ever more extreme, the inherent tension between the Polish authorities and Ukrainian scouting was bound to come to a head.

The Polish government's antagonistic approach to Plast in Eastern Galicia was evident almost from the outset. Throughout the 1920s, it practiced various forms of harassment designed to discourage Ukrainian

youth from participating in Ukrainian scouting. Most notable were the trials of Plast members who were accused of belonging to nationalistic organizations. These measures were so disturbing that some members of the VPR briefly considered disbanding their organization, in order not to expose teenagers to police persecution and constant surveillance. But the vast majority of the Plast scouts and their leaders were unwilling to consider this option. They refused to limit their activities, and even expanded them. This infuriated the Poles in Eastern Galicia, and their newspapers repeatedly reported on these “subversive” Plast activities and urged their government to take appropriate measures.

## **Volhynia**

The Polish authorities indicated the extent of their antagonism towards Plast—and their inclination to repress and even destroy it—most clearly in Volhynia. Starting in late 1927, Plast was banned, first in Rivne and later throughout the entire province. An event that served as a pretext for these measures was a regional Plast jamboree held in Oleksandriia, near Rivne, in August 1927. Irritated by the sight of uniformed Ukrainian youths who arrived not only from all over Volhynia but also Galicia and even far-off Transcarpathia, local Poles flooded the police with complaints. The Polish press in Volhynia added to the furor by accusing Plast units in Rivne of being an “organization of militant Ukrainian nationalists.” The city reeve quickly concluded that the gymnastics groups associated with the educational Prosvita network were actually a cover for Plast activity, and that “their main interest was not sports but politics.” Therefore, on 18 December 1927, he issued an order stipulating that all Plast units in his region were to be disbanded within a week. Soon afterwards, on 21 February 1928, the governor of Volhynia expanded the ban to all Plast units in the entire province.

In order to avoid confrontation, the relatively small Plast units in Volhynia disbanded quietly and, for most part, ceased their activities. However, in late 1928 M. Horbenko, I. Skoryk, and O. Bakhiv formed a clandestine Plast group in Lutsk that established contacts with Lviv and attempted to revive Plast activity in the province. The VPK secretly dispatched Yaro Hladkyi, a student at the Lviv Polytechnic, to aid them in their efforts. Several small units were formed, and contacts were established with German scouts. On 13 May 1929 a number of Plast members in Lutsk even dared to appear in uniform at a commemoration for fallen Ukrainian soldiers. In the Rivne region, which was the most active,

a Plast unit numbering about 40 members reappeared in 1929, largely thanks to the committed and effective efforts of the Plast supporter S. Semeniuk. The police were well informed about these activities, and in 1932 they brought Semeniuk and his colleagues to trial, accused them of belonging to a nationalist organization, and had him sentenced. Thereafter, the few reactivated units in Volhynia were dissolved.

## Galicia

The Ukrainians in Galicia were much stronger politically and organizationally than their brethren in Volhynia. Moreover, a large, well-established organization such as Plast in Galicia posed a much greater problem for the Polish authorities than it did in Volhynia. This may explain somewhat the delayed offensive against the organization in Galicia. But many also take the view that Polish officials were merely waiting for a pretext to launch another broad blow against the Ukrainian scouting movement.

The denouement came, in dramatic circumstances, in 1930. That year, the escalating confrontation between the Polish government and Ukrainian society reached a boiling point. In response to Polish efforts to settle colonists on confiscated lands from which indigenous Ukrainians had been evicted, the Ukrainian Military Organization (*Ukraïnska viiskova orhanizatsia*, or UVO) initiated a sabotage campaign. The authorities, in retaliation, launched an all-out offensive against Ukrainian activists, organizations, and institutions that involved mass arrests, beatings, and destruction of property. It was only a matter of time before these repressive measures would be directed at the scouting organization.

The event which focused the Polish government's full fury on the Ukrainian scouting organization occurred on 13 July 1930. In an attempt to obtain funds for the UVO, a group of five young Ukrainians attacked a mail carriage near the village of Bibrka. During the exchange of fire, a policeman was killed. In the ensuing pursuit, one of the group's members was also shot and killed. He was Hryhorii Pisetsky, a young student who was in the UVO; he was also an active member of Plast. Indeed, to emphasize his commitment to Plast—he was a member of the *Lisovi Chorty* fraternity—Pisetsky took part in the attack in full Plast uniform (other accounts state that his participation, and thus his being in uniform, was a happenstance).

This was all the Polish press needed. A wave of articles appeared that associated Plast with the UVO. Seeking to make the entire organization responsible for the action of a single individual, they argued that



Plast routinely trained recruits for terrorist cells. One Polish paper even claimed that the hikes which occurred at the Plast camp near Uhniv were actually separatist-inspired reconnaissance units studying the terrain in preparation for enemy action. Ignoring the fact that the government had been persecuting Plast, at least at the local level, for almost a decade, Polish press and society demanded that, as retribution for the Bibrka incident, a decisive blow be struck against Plast in the entire province of Galicia.

## **Banned**

The government was only too ready to respond to “popular opinion.” On 26 September 1930 the reeve of Lviv ordered the main office of UKTODOM, the sponsoring organization of Plast, to immediately disband all Plast units. The rationale for this order was contrived: for seven years Plast had functioned openly as a division of UKTODOM (which had the right to form youth groups), but suddenly the Polish authorities decided that Plast activities contravened a 1923 document and were therefore illegal. Plast was accused of being an “anti-state” organization, its leadership was condemned for transgressing school statutes, and its members were forbidden to wear uniforms or insignia. The organization was given 14 days to shut itself down. Meanwhile, the three other counties of Polish-occupied Galicia also instituted the ban, and police in all counties of Galicia were instructed to see that it was enforced.

Despite the fact that the Polish government demanded that Plast liquidate itself, the police often took matters in their own hands. Already in the evening of the day when the ban was announced, searches were conducted in the homes of about 40 Plast leaders and activists in Lviv. Uniforms, insignia, and documents were confiscated. In some cases, policemen physically assaulted youngsters who were found wearing their uniforms. The main Plast headquarters in Lviv were sealed, and local meeting premises were raided and vandalized. In Peremyshl, 80 policemen raided the Plast offices, carted away everything found there, and arrested scoutmaster Leonid Bachynsky and organizer Volodymyr Zahaikevych, as well as numerous high school students suspected of belonging to the organization. One of the founders of Plast, Ivan Chmola, was arrested in Yavoriv.

The Polish chief in Drohobych was particularly brutal. After conducting searches in organizations that might in any way be linked to Plast, he ordered the arrests of two leading activists, O. Levytsky and

scoutmaster M. Ivanenko as well as 30 other individuals. They were led off to jail in handcuffs. In Kolomyia, another 18 members were arrested. Some Plast leaders, such as F. Bilenky in Stanyslaviv, were arrested not once but twice. Throughout Galicia, large numbers of scouts were subjected to police investigation. As if this were not enough, on the night of 28 September someone set the Plast camp at Sokil, with its newly constructed dorms and kitchen, afire. Not surprisingly, the police investigation failed to find the culprit.

After the initial wave of arrests and investigations came the trials. In January 1931, 20 scouts in Zolochiv were accused of belonging to an “illegal and subversive society.” On 18–20 February, 96 scouts were put on trial in Stryi, a bastion of Plast activity; in March, 18 scouts were brought before the magistrate in Kolomyia; and in April, another 12 were arraigned in Ternopil. Invariably, these trials ended in acquittals, since it was an easy matter for lawyers to prove that Plast had the legal right to carry on its activities, and that accusations of subversive activities were baseless. However, there were also cases such as one in Sambir on 14 February 1931, when an especially chauvinistic judge ignored all arguments to the contrary and sentenced 20 scouts to serve one- and two-month sentences in jail.

The government’s attack on Plast became a matter of heated debate among both Poles and Ukrainians. Obviously, the latter unanimously criticized these extraordinarily harsh measures against a youth organization. More moderate elements in Polish society raised the possibility of legalizing Ukrainian scouting, but the conditions they posed were unacceptable to Plast. For example, the newspaper *Słowo Polskie* stated

### **Polish police chief Kwasniewski**

On Sunday 21 September 1930, police chief Kwasniewski met a Plast scout, Yaroslav Starukh, walking through the town square in his uniform on his way to a festival. He grabbed him by his shirt and loudly demanded that he identify himself. Starukh answered that the police chief knew very well who he was, since he lived in the house next to his. And he asked the police chief whether it was civilized behavior to hit someone, who is walking in the town square, in the chest. Instead of replying, the police chief struck Starukh twice in the face. [...] Later that evening, the Plast orchestra was thrown out of the festival and brought to police headquarters, where all 25 of their instruments were confiscated. The next day the Plast headquarters were raided, library and canteen were requisitioned, and the premises were locked.<sup>1</sup>

on 17 August 1931 that “if the Ukrainians want Plast to develop unhindered, then it should function as a sports organization...and it should not blunder into ways that lead to political conflicts.” Ukrainian youths, it declared, should demonstrate “absolute loyalty to the [Polish] state.” This effectively meant the Plast members could be neither real scouts nor real Ukrainian patriots.<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of the Polish scouts towards their Ukrainian equals was extremely antagonistic. As committed Polish patriots, they found it impossible to express any sympathy for their fellow Ukrainian scouts. Their main newsletter, *Czuwaj*, denounced Plast members as “Czech spies” and described their activities as “banditry.” Some Polish scouts were quite forceful in demonstrating their animosity toward Ukrainians. In one case, which occurred in August 1930, a Polish scout leader in the village of Potik near Rohatyn verbally abused and then shot at three village boys with a pistol. Wounding one of them, he began beating him until other villagers forced him to desist. He then threatened to bring in his scout troop to shoot up the entire village.<sup>3</sup> This was clearly an extreme case, but it does reflect the tension of the times. What is also clear is that while patriotism was encouraged, even demanded, among the Polish *harczerze*, the Ukrainian *plastuny* were denied, by their Polish colleagues, the right to express similar sentiments.

### *The Plast reaction*

Following the ban on Plast in Volhynia, and especially the tragic events at Bibrka, the Plast leadership expected government repression of some kind. But it probably did not expect that these measures would be all-encompassing, severe, and even brutal. It became clear that the Polish authorities intended to go beyond repression; their goal was the complete destruction of Plast, from the central leadership to the smallest units. Officially, the Plast leadership appeared to accept the government’s ban. It created a “Liquidation Committee,” made up of ВРК members (S. Levytsky, O. Tysovsky, Ts. Palijiw, V. Yaniv, Ya. Hladkyi, I. Seniv, V. Vertsiona, L. Buchatsky, and N. Piaseckyj), with the ostensible function of supervising the dissolution of the organization.

Actually, the real purpose of the committee was to serve as a legally recognized entity that could aid arrested members, prevent Plast funds and property from falling into government hands, and maintain camp facilities. Simultaneously, the legitimate Liquidation Committee created a semi-legal subcommittee, the Executive Section (*Vykonavchy Viddil*), led by Vertsiona, whose mandate was to secretly coordinate



*Activities of Clandestine Plast, 1930.*

and lead Plast activity under the new and difficult circumstances; such highly visible members as DROT (Tysovsky) and Siryi Lev (Levytsky) were not included.

A similar approach was applied to the rank-and-file members of Plast. On 1 October 1930 the central office of UKTODOM, Plast's sponsoring organization, issued a directive instructing its Plast affiliates to cease their activities. But at the same time, the Executive Section surreptitiously instructed Plast units not to disband but merely temporarily cease their activities. It added that it expected all scouts to remain true to their scout oath. However, in order not to expose minors to police harassment and persecution, junior and boy and girl scouts were no longer considered to be members of the banned scouting organization. They were advised to instead join legally recognized youth, school, or sports organizations. Thus, membership in the Clandestine Plast was now limited to rover-rank scouts and the scout-seniors.

## Schism, and the OUN factor

In the final months of 1930, the Plast leaders and adult scouts began to consider their options. One was to admit defeat and dissolve their organization completely. The other was to continue functioning, illegally and in a limited, altered form. In January 1931, in the snow-bound Carpathian village of Slavske, after a long and heated debate among Plast activists and leaders, the view prevailed that Plast should continue on as a secret organization. Yaro Hladkyi was especially forceful in promoting this position.

The decision, however, was a very costly one; it exacerbated a conflict of opinions that had been growing among older Plast members for a number of years. At issue was the question—and it was one that would repeatedly arise in Plast's history—of whether Plast should remain an ideologically and organizationally independent organization or whether it should, especially in these difficult circumstances, merge or ally itself with other clandestine Ukrainian organizations. What brought this issue to a head was the emergence, in 1930, of a new militant underground organization, the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists).

Because the OUN was committed to resisting Polish repressions by all means possible, it appealed to Western Ukrainian youths in general and adult scouts in particular. Many of them argued that if Plast was to go underground, it might as well merge with and strengthen the OUN. In 1931–33, a series of meetings took place between Plast and the OUN, with Yaro Hladkyi representing the former and Osyp Boidunyk and Ivan Maliutsa the latter. Despite pressure from many of its current and former members, the Clandestine Plast steadfastly refused to merge with the OUN.

The refusal to merge with the OUN rested on three key points. First, Plast representatives recognized the crucial and irreconcilable ideological differences between their liberal, humanistic scouting oath and the ultra-nationalistic, authoritarian Decalog of the OUN. Second, Plast emphasized its main goal of character development for youth, and its multifaceted approach to this goal; the OUN, meanwhile, had strictly political goals and ignored the development of the individual. Thirdly, Plast believed that encouraging youth to participate in revolutionary activity was irresponsible, while the OUN counted on youth to carry out dangerous activities in pursuit of its goals.

In 1933, the two organizations finally agreed on a principle of exclusive membership, that is, Plast members could not be OUN members and vice-versa. While this agreement clarified matters, it also disillusioned many adult scouts who were pro-OUN. As a result, large numbers of them—Levytsky called them “separatists”—resigned from Plast and joined the OUN. However, at an individual level, especially in the scout-senior fraternities like the *Lisovi Chorty* or the *Chornomortsi*, bonds of friendship that had been forged since childhood continued to hold.

Other older scouts took a completely opposite approach; they rejected all illegal activity, be it in Plast or the OUN. Their choice was to join existing legal organizations, most often those associated with the Catholic Action movement of the Greco-Catholic Church. In 1934 this church decided to form a youth organization called *Orly* (Eagles; it even-

tually had 30,000 members), which modeled itself in many ways on Plast. Church authorities proposed that the Plast leadership “emerge from the underground” and help develop the new organization. But when it became clear that the Plast activists were expected to sacrifice their organizational independence, compromise their scout principles, and adopt a sectarian stance, they again refused to cooperate. This led to some tensions with Greco-Catholic clergy, but it also proved that no matter what the cost, the Clandestine Plast leadership was not prepared to compromise its scouting principles or surrender its organizational independence.<sup>4</sup>

Yet another option arose after 1932. Recognizing Plast’s appeal, the Polish government feared that many Ukrainian youths would be drawn to the newly formed OUN. So it indicated that it might consider the legalization of Plast, but only if Plast agreed to be incorporated into the Polish scouting movement—that is, accept Polish supervision and complete loyalty to the Polish government. Not surprisingly, the negotiations between the Lviv *starosta* and Ukrainian community representatives broke off quickly when it became apparent that the Plast leadership would not accept the Polish conditions, even if it meant giving up the opportunity to become a legally recognized organization.

The decisions taken in the first few years after Plast was banned were of crucial importance for the organization’s later history. Although they led to numerous defections—including many outstanding scouts—those who remained formed a committed cohort that was united in its unwavering devotion to the original mission of Plast. Now greatly reduced in numbers, they constituted a tightly knit group that worked harmoniously and effectively together. Furthermore, they demonstrated that no matter how great the pressure or how tempting the proposals, the Plast leadership would not compromise on its insistence that the organization remain independent

### **Bereft**

From a letter written in January 1932 by Liza Melnychyshyn, a girls’ troop scoutmaster:

“As long as Plast existed, we experienced many emotions, joyous and moving. But now...everything is going monotonously, without life or movement. Actually, the dissolution of Plast has cost me half of a life. When I think about it all, I feel a pain in my chest, as if a heavy rock fell on me and crushed me mercilessly. Only my belief in a better reality prevents me from taking my own life.”<sup>5</sup>

of all political and sectarian forces. It would remain loyal to the idea that development of the individual was its ultimate goal; and it would continue to reject the view that its individual members should be trained primarily to serve particular political and sectarian goals.

## **Clandestine Plast**

Once Plast became an illegal organization, the activities of its members had to go underground. They took on a variety of forms and guises. Indeed, in discussing this period it is sometimes difficult to establish what could and what could not be considered Plast activity. Since the Clandestine Plast no longer kept regular records, even its membership was difficult to establish. There was, first of all, the secret leadership, comprising members of the last *ВПК*, who in 1930 formed the Liquidation Committee, and soon after created the clandestine Executive Section. Working with them was a core group of about 50 close associates, individuals who had worked continuously or had grown up in Plast. They devoted virtually all the spare time they had from their jobs or studies to preserving the traditions, values, and goals of Ukrainian scouting, without compensation and often at considerable personal risk.

Although almost all its members were based in Lviv, the Clandestine Plast leadership did not have a permanent headquarters; they held annual conferences and meetings, usually in remote Carpathian locations, to avoid police raids. For example, in 1931 the Executive met at Mt. Hrynkyv, near Sokil. This conference had to disband hurriedly because Polish police appeared in the vicinity. In 1932 and 1933 they met atop Mt. Dovbushanka.

In July 1934, the conference was held on Mt. Hoverlia. This was an especially important meeting, for it decided to disband the Liquidation Committee and Executive Section and create a new body to direct Plast activity that was better suited to clandestine work. It was called the Plast Center (*PC*) and consisted of just 6–8 experienced officers, mostly from the old *ВПК*, all of whom were sworn to secrecy. Led by Yaro Hladkyi, it included Tsiopa Palijiw, Yuriy Starosolsky, S. Kostetsky, P. Rak, R. Olesnytsky, and, later, B. Pavliuk and Hanka Korenets. The leader of this group was also considered to be the Supreme Otaman. Later, the *PC* attempted to also form a consultative body consisting of the most experienced scoutmasters (only the *PC* had the right to grant the title of scoutmaster), but this did not occur.

The *PC* was recognized, at least in theory, as the highest authority in Plast, not only in Polish-occupied Galicia and Volhynia but also by the Ukrainian scouts in Transcarpathia and in the entire diaspora.



*Camp Ostodir, 1933. Land donated by Metropolitan Sheptytsky. Clandestine Plast usually held meetings in isolated Carpathian spots to avoid police raids.*

Despite the difficulties related to its illegal existence, for the next decade the PC managed to impart a sense of unity to the widely scattered and highly differentiated elements of the Ukrainian scouting family. Several of its members, notably Hladkyi in 1936, undertook secret and dangerous journeys to Transcarpathia and Prague in order to maintain contacts with Plast members. Tragically, when the war broke out in 1939, some members of the PC, including S. Kostetsky (1941), Volodymyr Kashytsky (1939), and D. Chornega (1940), lost their lives while illegally crossing borders in the various occupation zones.

Another category of Clandestine Plast members were the scout-seniors who had grown up in Plast, and whose fraternities and sororities continued to exist as informal associations. These social groups continued to organize, under various guises, hikes and camps for their members; more importantly, they supplied the leaders and counselors for larger camps of junior and boy and girl scout-age children. As noted above, the size of this cohort was greatly reduced when a large number (including members of the *Chervona Kalyna* fraternity) joined the OUN and therefore ceased being members of Clandestine Plast. It is estimated that throughout the 1930s, the rank-and-file members of Clandestine Plast numbered several hundred at most.

What of the more than 5,000 scouts who had belonged to Plast before it was banned? They were no longer considered members, since legally, the organization no longer existed. However, in the years immediately





*Olha Kuzmowycz took the Plast Oath clandestinely in a high school in Drohobych. Later, she was a leader of Plast in the USA.*

after the ban, a number of older scout troops continued operating in secret. Based at gymnasia in cities and towns such as Lviv, Ternopil, Brody, Stanyslaviv, Yavoriv, Kolomyia, and Drohobych, these loyalists met in dormitories or premises of supportive parishes and organizations. They strove to keep up with the program, organized hikes and camping trips, and took part in patriotic events, out of uniform. The Clandestine Plast leadership in Lviv maintained contacts with some of these groups and attempted to support them. But since they did not accept new, inexperienced, or untested members, almost all the underground units disbanded after several years. Only a few of those scouts advanced to become scout-seniors and stayed involved in Clandestine Plast.

Much more common was the merging of scout units into other, legally recognized youth organizations. This was usually done for the purpose of obtaining a legal “cover” and in the hope that the units could continue much of their previous activity, except without uniforms, without insignia, and with only a very loose relationship to the Clandestine Plast leadership. For example, in Stanyslaviv the oldest boy scout patrol enrolled en masse in the Chornohora Sports Society, and in this guise continued their scouting activities. Meanwhile, girls’ patrols acted similarly, enrolling in the youth division of the Ukrainian Women’s League.

Other organizations that received a large influx of former Plast members included the Sokil Ukrainian Sports Association, the Luh Gymnastics Society, the KLK ski club, and the youth divisions of Ridna Shkola, Prosvita, and *Soiuz Ukraïnok*. In addition, the Plai Hiking Association consisted almost totally of former Plast members. Undoubtedly, the influx of former Plast members into other organizations helped to spread the Plast values, methods, and worldview among Ukrainian youth. But the dispersal of membership among various groups, in the absence of a legally operating home organization, also made the task of maintaining Plast core values more difficult than ever before.

## *Vohni magazine*

In order to assure that the Plast ideology continued to be propagated, immediately after the ban the Clandestine Plast leadership established a magazine for youth called *Vohni* (Fires). This was an extremely important development. Indeed, the period when it was published, 1931–39, was frequently referred to as the *Vohni* epoch in Plast's history. Based on a previously functioning Plast publishing cooperative, the magazine became operational very quickly. Its first issue appeared within four months of the ban, in January 1931, and by 1935 *Vohni* had published 50 more issues, despite police raids and confiscations. Its editors were some of the most committed Plast activists, such as Ye. Pelensky, V. Karkhut, and Ya. Hladkyi.

The primary function of *Vohni* was to disseminate Plast ideology, even when the organization could not function normally. To emphasize this mission, in fall 1934 the magazine, which originally had the neutral byline *Magazine for Ukrainian youth*, changed it to the more demonstrative *Ideological journal of the new generation*. On its title page the editors boldly emblazoned the proscribed Plast motto *СКОБ* (*sylno-krasno-oberezhno-bystro* 'strongly, beautifully, carefully, quickly'). In addition to the magazine, the editorial board also published a number of youth-oriented books. Plast principles were also promoted by activists in other publications. For example, from 1936 to 1939 R. Olesnytsky, a member of the PC, edited the monthly magazine for teenagers called *Na slidi* (Following the Trail).

The need to defend Plast principles was certainly great. While the Polish government banned the scouting organization, some other Ukrainian organizations, most notably the extremely nationalist OUN, engaged in frequent and aggressive criticism of the liberal and democratic ideals espoused by Clandestine Plast and the *Vohni* magazine. The OUN polemicists argued that the time had come for an uncompromising revolutionary struggle against the Polish enemy that left no room for moral and ethical concerns.

In response, *Vohni* repeatedly stated that Plast would never agree to abandon its basic principles. These were: (1) the primacy of moral-ethical ideals in the development of youth; (2) discouraging youth from getting involved in party politics; (3) the independence of Plast from any political, party, or faith-based organizations; and (4) defending democratic principles within Plast against totalitarian tendencies from the Left or the Right.

This ideological stance was one Plast had advocated from the very outset. But in the increasingly intolerant and combative atmosphere of the 1930s, defending this liberal position demanded courage and commitment. As Levytsky noted, it was a time when not the kerchief or short pants marked the scout, but rather his or her commitment to scouting ideals.

## *The Plast Cooperative*

During the 1920s, Plast's main source of funding was membership dues. Deprived of these revenues after 1930, the Clandestine Plast leadership had to find new sources of income to finance its activities, limited though they were. From 1931 to 1939 this function was performed almost exclusively by the Plast Manufacturing and Retail Cooperative, which specialized in camping equipment. Up to 1930 it had been a relatively modest venture, and it was actually one of the first Plast affiliates that was raided by the Polish police. Although nothing incriminating was found, the police shut down the cooperative in 1930; however, its managers—the indefatigable A. Serbyn, who stressed the need for a solid physical inventory for the organization, and Tsiopa Palijiw—argued that the cooperative was not a youth organization but a commercial enterprise. As such, it was protected by special laws that applied to cooperatives. The Polish authorities had to concede the point, and allowed it to re-open in the summer of 1931. Reluctantly, they even acquiesced to the cooperative's use of the name "Plast."

Patronized by former and current scouts, sports and tourism enthusiasts, and the general Ukrainian public, the co-op expanded rapidly. Within a year it opened another store in Lviv and several provincial outlets. A number of ateliers produced new products, and membership grew to about 100, with a capital fund of 7,600 Polish zloty. The company was managed by one director and two students.

The considerable profits from this venture were used to finance publications and the construction and upkeep of campground buildings. The cooperative also performed another important function: it served as an innocuous meeting-place, where friendships and contacts could be maintained between those who remained in Clandestine Plast and those who had left to join other organizations.

## *Camping*

A key priority of the Clandestine Plast was to retain its access to Ukrainian youth. While the traditional Plast activities such as weekly meetings, ranking and badge exams, and participation in public events and celebrations could no longer be carried out in cities and towns because of the presence of Polish police, one area where the interference of Polish authorities could be limited or avoided was in summer camps. Therefore, they became a focal point of activity for current and former Plast scouts.



*Camp organized in Ostodir by Clandestine Plast, 1932.*

An organization had to be found that would agree to sponsor these camps. In summer 1931, UKTODOM, which ran a network of orphanages and children's shelters, did this favour, thanks largely to its president, A. Karatnytsky, who was an ardent supporter of Plast. With added generous help from Metropolitan Sheptytsky, who provided land and material assistance, and with unused funds that had been collected in 1930 to buy a headquarters in Lviv, a spacious camp outbuilding for the UPN junior scouts was completed at Ostodir in 1932. Each year, about 150–200 junior scouts spent much of the summer there. Their program was very much like that of regular Plast camps, except without uniforms. For years, counselors at that camp were members of the scout-senior fraternity *Orden zaliznoi ostrohy*. The camp director was Rev. O. Buchatsky, who had fulfilled this role during the pre-1930 period.

In 1933 the buildings at the much-beloved Camp Sokil were renovated, thanks to the support of Rev. Tyt Voinarovsky, and a camp for girl and boy scouts commenced operation. Each year, about 60–80 teenage boys and girls came, in two tours, to the camp. It, too, followed a regular Plast program. Here, Clandestine Plast activists such as Tsiopa Palijiw and Yuriy Starosolsky supervised the program. That same year, the Ukrainian Hygiene Society provided the cover for another UPN junior scout camp in Stariava in the Lemko region; the indefatigable Leonid Bachynsky served as camp director there. In the winter, the hiking organization Plai, composed almost exclusively of former Plast members, held its ski camps there. For Clandestine Plast activists, these camps offered another advantage: they served as convenient places where they could gather, reestablish contacts, and plan their activities without police interference.



*Clandestine Plast camp activities at Ostodir, 1933.*

So rapid and extensive was the growth of camping activity that in 1934 Clandestine Plast, under the guise of forming a subcommittee of UKTODOM, established a single organization to run the various camps (KVOM). The rules and directives, formulated by H. Pavliukh and a board of seven members, were almost exactly like those of Plast; this was not surprising, since Tysovsky was their author. In their structure, the camps were copies of their Plast predecessors. Indeed, some reports noted that the camps functioned at least as well as those in the 1920s, if not better.

Between 1931 and 1934, there were 12 rotations in the stationary camps, involving over 2,000 participants. This was equal to the level of Plast's camp participation in 1930. Campers of little means received support from Ukrainian cooperatives such as Maslosoiuz and Centrosouiz. The costs were further contained by the fact that camp staff worked on a volunteer basis.

There were, however, some changes in the social background of the campers. Because the Clandestine Plast network was limited, campers came primarily from cities and from intelligentsia families. Thus, while in 1930 village and working-class youth had constituted 40% of campers, in 1936 they accounted for only 20%. On the other hand, the geographical distribution of the campers was considerable, including all of Galicia (in 1936 about 30% were from Lviv), as well as Krakow and Warsaw. Some campers even came, regularly but surreptitiously, from Volhynia and Transcarpathia. The Polish police were aware of the bustling activity in the summer camps, but they did not interfere until the late 1930s, as the war loomed. In 1938 the Sokil camp was to be closed, but the order was rescinded thanks to pressure applied by Ukrainian politicians. A similar situation developed in 1939, but this time the threat of war became a reality.

### *Clandestine Plast and Dorist*

In order to broaden their contacts with peasant and working-class families, in 1936 Clandestine Plast became involved in organizing a youth affiliate of the extensive *Ridna Shkola* educational society. Supported by M. Panchyshyn, the president of *Ridna Shkola*, they established a special commission and designed a program for its organization *Dorist* (Growing Up). Yet again, O. Tysovsky was chosen to compile the rules and directives of the new organization. The program proved to be remarkably appealing to children and teenagers in working-class areas of rural Galicia, most of whom did not attend school.

Within a year, *Dorist* established 873 groups, with a total of 6,188 members. In addition, Clandestine Plast activists, specifically the *Vohni* group, began to publish a biweekly journal, *Shliakh molodi* (Path for Youth), for *Dorist*. Edited by two scout-seniors, V. Kalynovych and O. Struk (*Chornomortsi* fraternity), the journal had a press-run of about 5,000. Alarmed by the rapid growth of this clearly Plast-influenced organization, the Polish authorities ordered it disbanded in 1937; however, the journal continued to appear until 1939.

In 1936, the Clandestine Plast leadership made a concerted effort to remind the Ukrainian public of Plast's history and its current plight.



“To Mt. Makivka: on the Opor R.” Activities of Clandestine Plast, 1938.

The original idea, which emerged from the *Vohni* group, called for the establishment of a Plast section in the museum of the Shevchenko Scientific Society (NTsh). As a first step towards this goal, NTsh decided to organize an exhibit in Lviv commemorating the 25th anniversary of the founding of Plast.

Initially, work on the project, led by Bohdan Kyveliuk, went very well; great numbers of exhibit items from all over Galicia and abroad were collected, and fundraising was also very successful. Work on this project attracted much attention among Ukrainian youth, and encouraged some to volunteer for Clandestine Plast. Also, many former “separatists” used the occasion to reestablish ties. Unfortunately, the Polish authorities noticed the exhibit, and banned it. Nonetheless, the event indicated that support for Plast was still widespread in Western Ukrainian society. This was to be the last major project undertaken by Clandestine Plast before the onset of WWII.

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The 1930s were a traumatic time for Plast in Galicia and Volhynia, when it was subjected to the wrath of the Polish state and its officials. Despite being declared illegal it survived, albeit in a very diminished form. Strikingly, it still possessed a solid core of committed members who sought to preserve the values of the organization. And former members of Plast carried the values of scouting into the organizations they joined after Plast was banned. This, no doubt, raised the overall moral and organizational level of Western Ukrainian society. In doing so, Plast, even when it was banned, contributed greatly to the society from which it had sprung.

Notes:

1. Savchuk, Borys. *Ukraïns'kyi Plast, 1911–1939* (Ivano-Frankivsk: Lileia-NV 1996), p. 205
2. *Ibid.*, p. 208
3. *Ibid.*, p. 209
4. *Ibid.*, p. 218
5. Levyts'kyi [Levytsky], Severyn. *Ukraïns'kyi plastovyi ulad 1911–1945* (Munich–Augsburg 1967), p. 36



## Chapter 4

# Transcarpathia

Another major arena of Plast activity during the interwar period was Transcarpathia. Located on the western slopes of the Carpathians, this 15,000 sq. km region was a part of Czechoslovakia from 1919 to 1939. Transcarpathia had a mixed ethnic population of about 725,000, of whom 450,000 were Ukrainian. However, the national consciousness of these Ukrainians was relatively weakly developed, and their national identity awareness was vague. Most referred to their land as *Pidkarpatska Rus* (Subcarpathian Ruthenia) and called themselves *Rusyny* (Ruthenians)—an ancient historical term, used generations earlier also by Ukrainian Galicians. Transcarpathia was economically underdeveloped; its few larger towns—Uzhhorod, Mukachiv, Khust, and Berehovo—were mostly inhabited by Jews, Hungarians, and Czechs and Slovaks, while most Ukrainians lived in impoverished villages. The urban Ukrainians were members of a minuscule intelligentsia, or had come from the countryside to attend secondary schools and colleges. It was these youths who became involved in the development of Plast. In addition, many Galician and Eastern Ukrainian political émigrés who settled in Transcarpathia were an important element in the growth of Ukrainian institutions and organizations there.





## Origins

Three Ukrainian émigrés—Andrii Didyk and Ostap Vakhnianyn from Galicia and Leonid Bachynsky from Eastern Ukraine—were the founders of Plast in Transcarpathia. On 17 May 1921 Didyk, a teacher in the recently opened Ruthenian Gymnasium in Berehovo, formed the first Ukrainian scout patrol in the region; the name “Plast” was officially adopted in 1927. It started with six members, but within six months had already attracted 28 more. In the summer of 1922, Didyk organized the first scout camp, near Rakhiv. Another pioneer of Ukrainian scouting in Transcarpathia was Volodymyr Komarynsky, who worked with Didyk. By February 1923, the very popular, energetic, and respected Ostap Vakhnianyn formed six scout patrols in Uzhhorod. Largely through their efforts, soon afterwards (by the end of 1923) there were 11 scout troops with 260 members. By 1931, the number had grown to 30 troops and 1,361 members, for the most part based in towns and cities. The largest concentration was in Uzhhorod, with as many as six troops, followed by Khust.

To make membership in the organization more appealing, Vakhnianyn also established a scout choir and theater group, and invited the Eastern Ukrainian émigré poet Spyrydon Cherkasenko to write a series of plays and songs for the scouts. He also composed the words to music by Yaroslav Yaroslavenko, which became the famous “Anthem of the Transcarpathian Scouts.” Vakhnianyn also wrote a manual, *Plastovym shliakhom za krasoiu zhyttia* (Plast’s Path toward the Beauty of Life) and edited the Ukrainian section in the trilingual scout journal *Plastun–Junak–Cserkész*. It was a major setback for Plast in Transcarpathia that this beloved leader died tragically in 1924.

While Didyk was the pioneer of Transcarpathian Plast and Vakhnianyn was its inspiration, Leonid Bachynsky, a teacher in the Uzhhorod gymnasium, served as the movement’s organizer and leader for much of the 1920s. As new scout troops were established, each functioned independently; there were few guidelines and no central leadership. In 1924, Bachynsky became the representative for Ruthenian scouts in Transcarpathia’s multinational scouting organization.

One of his first goals, undertaken with close and frequent consultation with the VPK in Lviv, was to consolidate the scattered units, provide them with uniform guidelines, and expand their membership. The success of his efforts was reflected in the fact that by 1926, Plast in Transcarpathia had 28 troops, 15 male and 13 female, consisting of 476 boys and 182 girls. At that time, there were not yet any junior or rover-rank scouts.



*Girl scouts in Transcarpathia, 1927.*

This changed in 1926, when a group of Vakhnianyn's scouts who had gone on to higher studies in Prague formed the *Vakhnianivtsi* fraternity. And in 1927, Bachynsky established the first junior scout dens, in Uzhhorod.

## Organization

In its initial phase of development, Transcarpathian Plast encountered a unique set of advantages and disadvantages. Among the latter was the complete unfamiliarity of teenage youth with scouting, and the suspicion of or even opposition to it in some sectors of society. There were very few experienced leaders, and practically no scouting literature. However, the advantages were also considerable. Unlike their fellow scouts in Galicia, those in Transcarpathia enjoyed the support of the state (at least at the outset), in the form of modest subsidies, and also support from the Czechoslovak Scouting Association, in the form of advice and structural support. In short, they were part of a state-supported and internationally recognized scouting organization. This was a rarity in the history of Plast.

In organizational terms, the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) scout troops belonged to the Federation of Scouts of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, an umbrella organization that encompassed Ukrainian, Czech, Hungarian, and Jewish scouts. In 1930 the Federation included 1,361 Ukrainian, 565 Jewish, 269 Hungarian, and 30 Czech scouts. Each was subdivided into its own national group and was led by its own scoutmasters. Thus—unlike the case in Poland, where Plast refused to be incorporated into the Polish scouting movement—in Czech-ruled Transcarpathia, Plast was part of the statewide scouting organization, while maintaining broad au-

tonomy. This meant that it could participate in scouting activities such as jamborees, not only on a statewide but also at an international level.

The official leader of this Federation was a highly placed Czech official. However, in practice the actual leader was a regional director, who carried out the organizational work and maintained contact with the national scouting executive in Prague. Each national group leader, called a *referent*, reported to the Regional Director. Presumably because the Ruthenians (Ukrainians) were the largest group in the organization, from 1923 to 1928 the Regional Director was a Galician émigré, Andrii Aliskevych, who was the headmaster of the gymnasium in Uzhhorod and a strong Plast supporter. Moreover, the leader of all girls' troops in Transcarpathia was Anna Ustyianovych, another Plast activist. Thus, in the multinational scout federation of Transcarpathia, Ukrainians frequently held responsible and influential positions.

While Czech authorities supported scouting, they did their best to de-emphasize the national distinctions among the scouts. This was done by encouraging multinational camps and subsidizing the publication of a common scouting journal, *Plastun–Junak–Cserkész*, which appeared in three languages, Ukrainian or its Transcarpathian dialect, Czech, and Hungarian. Ukrainians resisted these denationalizing efforts. While they continued to participate in, and even lead, the multinational umbrella scouting federation, in 1929 they established their own, strictly Ukrainian Plast leadership, the Territorial Plast Executive (*Kraiova Plastova Starshyna*, or KPS), which claimed sole authority over all members of Plast in Transcarpathia and acted with a large degree of autonomy.

## Tensions and problems

The steady growth of Plast and its increasingly nationally conscious Ukrainian attitudes worried the Czech authorities. In 1928–9 this led to a crisis in Plast. The Russophiles in Transcarpathia, who considered the local Slavic population to be Russian rather than Ukrainian, lobbied the Czech authorities to banish L. Bachynsky and K. Zaklynsky from the region, thus depriving the Ukrainian scouts of their most effective leaders. The Czechs would not sanction a ban, but they did support the creation of the Dukhnovych Boy Scouts, a Russophile organization that actively sought to attract Plast members into its ranks.

Since many Russophiles held important positions in the school system, they began to impede the functioning of Plast units in the high schools. In the high school in Khust, for example, anti-Ukrainian administrators

forbade Plast members to identify themselves as Ukrainians. In Uzhhorod, a Russophile high school director decreed that anyone with poor marks for behavior could not belong to Plast. This directive did not apply, however, to Hungarian, Jewish, or Russophile scouting organizations.

Some Czech papers even claimed that Plast was an “anti-state” organization, and Czech police carried out frequent inspections of Plast activities. Meanwhile, there was little support for Plast among the politically passive and uninformed Ruthenian-Ukrainian population. Some members of the clergy even raised doubts about the usefulness or piety of the organization. Villagers, seeing scouts wandering about in shorts, sometimes equated them with tramps.

At the same time, the Czech police began to monitor Plast members more closely. They demanded that the organization provide it with lists of its members, and often obstructed many Plast activities. Finally, the Czech scouting movement itself became less supportive of Plast. In the late 1920s, the government forced Ukrainian activists who were political émigrés, including many involved in Plast—most notably Leonid Bachynsky—to leave the region. While these difficulties were not as oppressive as those faced by Plast in Polish-dominated Eastern Galicia, they did precipitate a sharp decline in Plast activity.

Nevertheless, the crisis was short-lived. A new generation of Plast leaders emerged, most of whom were born and bred in Transcarpathia. It included Yulian Revai, Yuri Sheregei, Bohdan Aliskevych and his wife, Rostyslava, B. Rubinovych, O. Blystiv, and Stepan Pap-Puhach. They instituted reforms that were similar to those which Plast in Eastern Galicia had carried out in 1924–5: the position of scoutmaster (*zviazkovyi*) was instituted, the large regiments (*polky*) were subdivided into the smaller, more manageable troops (*kurini*), more emphasis was placed on attracting members locally, especially in the villages, and measures were taken to counter the influence of the Dukhnovych Scouts. This soon produced positive results, and by 1931 Plast membership in Transcarpathia was double that in 1929.

Attempts to expand Plast into rural Transcarpathia moved slowly but steadily. The first unit was established by D. Ostapchuk in Velyki Luky in March 1929. It was structured in a special format that was adapted to village life and needs—namely, the troop, numbering 120, was divided into four units: two of “infantry,” one of “cavalry,” and one of firefighters. By 1933, the *Selo-Plast* in the province had 16 troops and 320 members, constituting about 10% of all Plast members. Progress was also made in organizing scout-senior and junior scout divisions. But attempts to form *Plast-pryiat* auxiliaries were largely unsuccessful.

By the early 1930s, a new, more self-confident and nationally oriented spirit was clearly dominant in Transcarpathian Plast. Indeed, much to the dismay of the Czechs and Russophiles, Plast had not only resumed its growth but was quickly becoming the most effective means of spreading national consciousness among the Ukrainian youth of Transcarpathia. In this regard, it was clearly fulfilling a historically important function.

By 1934, the Federation of Scouts of Subcarpathian Ruthenia reported the following membership statistics:

	Members	Troops
Ukrainians*	3,280	88
Jews	710	26
Hungarians	576	20
Dukhnovychi (Russophiles)	293	...
Czechs	120	6
* 970 boy scouts in 24 troops, 640 girl scouts in 16 troops, 115 scout-seniors in 8 troops, 860 junior boy scouts in 21 packs, and 659 junior girl scouts in 19 packs.		

By comparison, in all of Czechoslovakia, there were about 39,000 scouts.

## Activities

As noted above, in 1922 Didyk organized the first camping trip for 16 scouts. Based near Rakhiv, its high point was the scaling of Mount Hoverlia, the highest peak in the Carpathians. The following summer, the first stationary camp took place near Drakhiv in Khust county, with 35 boys and 12 girls participating. For more than a decade, Plast did not have its own camping site, and therefore, every year new locations had to be sought. The area near Svaliava, northeast of Mukachiv, was favored. There, near such villages as Luhy, Stavni, and especially Solochyn, tents were pitched and between 50 and 100 campers congregated in a single camp for a period of three weeks. Usually, there were 5–6 stationary camps and 3–4 camping trips per season. In 1934, a patriotic village couple, Mr. and Mrs. Medvid, presented Plast with a 3-acre plot of land near Verkhnie Vodne, which became Plast's first permanent camping

site. The *Hutsul Camp* had 14 simple cottages, built by the scouts themselves, and a chapel. It usually accommodated about 100 campers, and also served as a site for instructor training courses. The program of the camps was very similar to that of the Plast camps in Eastern Galicia. The total number of Plast campers grew rapidly. In the mid-1920s it averaged between 150 and 250, but by 1930 the number in fact had increased to nearly 900, which was about 30% of the total number of Plast members in Western Ukraine.

A major development in the Plast camping activity was the organization of the first Ukrainian Forest School leadership camp (*Lisova Shkola*). For more than a decade, Plast had requested that the Czech scout headquarters organize an advanced instructors' course in the Ukrainian region. Reluctantly, the Czech headquarters agreed to hold such a camp in Solochyn, but insisted that it include all nationalities. Finally, in 1938, the leader of the Ukrainian scouts, Stepan Pap-Puhach, took matters into his own hands. He appointed three Ukrainian graduates of the Czech Forest School as head counselors on the staff of the first all-Ukrainian Forest School. It attracted a large number of participants, 40 boys and 20 girls. These 60 experienced scouts all attained the level III (Star Scout) rank, and were promoted to instructors, 22 of them becoming scoutmasters who provided Plast troops throughout Transcarpathia with committed and capable leadership.

In 1934, there were three rover-rank fraternities in the Transcarpathian Plast; in 1936, a very active group of rover-rank scouts in Khust established a fourth fraternity, called the Lone Wildcats (*Samitni Rysi*). By 1938, the rover-rank scouts were ready to establish their own division in Plast, but the outbreak of WWII interfered with these plans. A large proportion of these older scouts joined the defense force of Carpatho-Ukraine, the Carpathian Sich, and many died resisting the Hungarian invasion.



*First Lisova Shkola leadership camp, 1938. The camp is held annually or biennially to this day.*

Although some junior scout packs (also called *vovcheniata* ‘wolf cubs’ and *lysyckhy* ‘vixens’) had been organized, their growth was slow due to the lack of experienced leaders. However, girl scout troops, led by Anna Bereza and R. Birchak-Aliskevych, were well run and did not lack for members.

Given the vicinity of the Carpathian Mountains, camping and hiking were extensive and frequent in the region. Initially, in the early 1920s, some of the camps were multinational, involving Ukrainian, Czech, Slovakian, Hungarian, and Jewish scouts. But soon each nationality began organizing its own separate camp. Ukrainians camps, some of which were co-ed, were fairly large, averaging about 50 participants.

### *International activity*

As a member of the internationally recognized Czechoslovak scouting federation, the Transcarpathian Plast had access, as official participants, to a large variety of international scouting events. The first major event in which Ukrainian scouts participated was the Slavic Jamboree in Prague in June–July 1931. The Transcarpathian Plast delegation numbered 36 boy scouts and 17 girl scouts. In addition, SUPE, the organization of Ukrainian émigré scouts based in Prague, also sent its representatives.

The two groups appeared in Ukrainian folk costumes and under a blue-and-yellow flag, leaving a very favourable impression among the 15,000 jamboree attendees. The Transcarpathian Plast scouts also participated successfully in the World Scouting Jamboree in Gödöllő (Hungary; Slovak: Jedľovo), in even greater numbers. The 55 boy scouts and 22 girl scouts prepared diligently, exchanged scouting badges, and demonstrated Ukrainian folk dancing and singing. Their performances were extremely popular, with many requests to repeat them for various groups among the 30,000 scouts taking part in the jamboree. The fact that they, as Ukrainians, attracted so much favorable attention at the international gathering added greatly to the morale of the entire Plast organization. In 1936, a group of Transcarpathian Plast scouts participated in the Romanian Scouting Jamboree, camped on the shores of the Black Sea, and even went on a tour of Constantinople.

### *Local festivities*

Realizing the value of large-scale events in popularizing scouting, the Transcarpathian Plast regularly organized events around traditional

feast days, such as St. George's Day, on a regional basis. The most noteworthy festivals took place in 1930 in Uzhhorod, 1932 in Khust, 1933 in Mukachiv, 1934 in Velykyi Bychkiv, and 1935 in Vynohradiv. Usually these celebrations attracted 300–500 scouts and several thousand visitors. In addition, Plast regularly participated in national celebrations, often playing a leading role. For example, in 1938 in Uzhhorod about 500 Ukrainian scouts led a huge parade of 15,000, the largest in Transcarpathia's history, that marked the congress of the Prosvita educational and cultural association. Events such as these were both an indication of and a catalyst for the growth of Plast. They also demonstrated the huge role that Plast played in raising the national consciousness of Ukrainian youth in the region.

A unique aspect of Plast-related activities was the unusually great emphasis that the organization placed on all aspects of Ukrainian folk culture. Not only did it appeal to the predominantly rural population, it also served as an especially effective means of stirring patriotism. In the early 1920s the Uzhhorod scouts formed a theatrical group, which performed the plays on scouting themes that Spirydon Cherkasenko had written for them. By the 1930s they were running well-trained theatrical troupes, *Veselka* and *Nova Stsena*, which toured various towns and villages, performing popular plays. Meanwhile, the Khust Plast scouts' 68-member youth choir was among the best in the region. Folk dancing was also popular. With so many well-trained performers, it is little wonder that the Ukrainian delegation at the Gödöllő Jamboree achieved great success.

### *Press*

As noted above, the first journal devoted to scouting in Transcarpathia was the trilingual government-supported magazine *Plastun–Junak–Cserkész*, in which each national group, Ukrainian, Czech, and Hungarian, had a separate section. The tone of this journal was internationalist and national distinctions were de-emphasized, although its Czech editor, Jozef Peszek, was supportive of the Ukrainians. In 1926 the trilingual journal ceased publication, and the Ukrainians began to publish their own journal, *Plastun*. Edited by Yulian Revai and written in the vernacular, it exhibited a new spirit, emphasizing local patriotism and populism, and stressing, much to the irritation of the Czech authorities, that a scout's duty was "loyalty to one's own people."

After a hiatus of several years, *Plastun* reappeared in 1932, still edited by Revai. At this point, it adopted an openly pan-Ukrainian pos-



ition, used literary Ukrainian, and argued that Transcarpathians were a part of the 40-million Ukrainian nation. In 1935 the journal ceased publication and was replaced, in 1938, by a journal with a classic Plast title, *Molode zhyttia* (Young Life). This title was chosen to emphasize the Transcarpathians' links to Ukrainian scouts in Eastern Galicia and the diaspora. In addition to these regional periodicals, Plast troops in most large branches published their own newsletters and leaflets. Because of the dearth of scouting literature in Ukrainian, the energetic Bachynsky founded a publishing cooperative to address the problem. In the course of five years (1924–29), this prolific enterprise published 23 booklets, in total over 38,100 copies) dealing with all aspects of scouting. However, when Bachynsky was banished in 1929, publishing activity declined.

## **Ties with SUPE and Galicia**

The ties of the Transcarpathian Plast with the Ukrainian émigré scouts based in Prague were close and cordial. Because the latter had more scout-seniors, who were moreover trained in the Czech instructor camps, they often provided the counselors for the camps in Transcarpathia, led by D. Kozytsky and others. In addition, the Transcarpathians who had come to Prague to study, notably the members of the *Vakhnianivtsi* fraternity, worked closely with SUPE (*Soyuz ukrainskykh plastuniv-émigrantiv*, or Union of Ukrainian Émigré Scouts). At the various jamborees throughout the 1930s, the two organizations always appeared together. When it became evident in the late 1930s that Transcarpathian Plast was on a firm footing, SUPE opted for closer organizational ties. Plans were set in motion to include SUPE units into the organizational structure of Transcarpathian Plast, and in 1939 SUPE appointed one of its officials to the Transcarpathian KPS with special responsibility for coordinating organizational issues.

Contacts with Eastern Galicia were more complicated, due to the international border. During the 1920s, Bachynsky frequently travelled to Lviv for advice and consultations. He acknowledged the ideological unity of the Transcarpathian Plast with Plast in Eastern Galicia, and sent reports on its activity to the VPK in Lviv, for which efforts, they recognized him as a scoutmaster and awarded him its highest distinction.

On the level of general membership, however, contacts were much more limited. Nonetheless, older Galician and Transcarpathian scouts,



*Scouts parading in Transcarpathia, 1938.*

often joined by SUPE members, developed a practice of illegally crossing the border and meeting high in the Carpathians. Scouts from Kosiv (led by Horbovyi) were frequent participants in these clandestine meetings. Some Transcarpathian scouts participated in Plast camps in Galicia in the 1920s and 1930s; they also helped to smuggle Galician scouts to jamborees in England and Hungary (Gödöllő). When the need to reorganize arose, the Transcarpathian scouts used the 1924–25 Galician reforms as a model. And they actively protested against the ban on Plast in Eastern Galicia, even to the point of threatening to boycott the Slavic jamboree in Warsaw in 1934.

Nonetheless, Transcarpathian scouting developed in a very different environment than that in Eastern Galicia, and it possessed features that were unique in the history of Plast. There were, however, other types of problems. Transcarpathians generally lacked the strong national consciousness of their Galician brethren. In this land that was largely inhabited by poor and often illiterate peasants, the Ukrainian organizational infrastructure was largely undeveloped. Moreover, while some Transcarpathians readily identified themselves as Ukrainians, others, especially in the villages, were confused about their nationality. Thus, they were susceptible to hostile propaganda and recruitment by Plast's Russophile scouting rival. Nonetheless, on the eve of WWII, Plast in Transcarpathia emerged not only as the largest and most dynamic organization among Ukrainian youth but also as a major factor in the spread of national consciousness in the region.



*Plast scouts participating in the creation of Carpatho-Ukraine, 1939.*

\* \* \*

Compared to the repressed conditions Plast had to endure in Eastern Galicia and the socioeconomic instability of the émigré members of SUPE, Plast in Transcarpathia developed in almost “normal” circumstances. It was a legally recognized entity based in its homeland; it enjoyed almost complete autonomy within the well-organized Czechoslovak scouting movement; and it was free to participate in international scouting events. Its growth was steady and regular, and the difficulties it experienced were not catastrophic. Transcarpathian Plast played a crucial role in the history of the overall organization. By combining the appeal of scouting with increasingly nationally oriented values and activities, it became a primary means of spreading Ukrainian national consciousness among the heretofore passive, politically uninformed, and uncommitted youth of the region.

Paradoxically, the steady, regular development of Plast in Transcarpathia came to a dramatic end. In 1938, the independent Carpatho-Ukrainian state was declared in Transcarpathia. But in March 1939 it was overrun by the overwhelming forces of Hungary. The hastily organized and poorly armed Ukrainian forces, including many former scouts, attempted to withstand the Hungarian invasion. Near Khust, the capital of Carpatho-Ukraine, over one hundred Ukrainian scouts, led by Plast leaders such as O. Blystiv and M. Kozychar, voluntarily marched directly from their school desks to the front lines. Fourteen of them died, mostly in the battle at Krasne Pole, their heroism a telling indication of the impact that Plast had on the youth of Transcarpathia. Little wonder that Hungarian authorities moved quickly to ban Plast. Subsequently, the Soviet occupiers of this region did likewise.

## Chapter 5

### Initial phase of diaspora Plast: Union of Ukrainian Émigré Scouts (SUPE)

During the interwar period, a new type of Ukrainian appeared in large numbers—the political émigré. Scattered throughout Western and especially Eastern Europe, Ukrainian émigré communities faced the daunting task of instilling in their youth—increasing numbers of whom had never seen the homeland of their parents—a sense of identification with, and commitment to, Ukraine and things Ukrainian. In short, they faced a new type of problem, that of assimilation. In order to deal with it, they focused great attention on youth-oriented organizations, and Plast was the foremost of these. Consequently, in addition to its traditional functions, Ukrainian scouting acquired a new one, serving as an important means of preserving the national identity of Ukrainian youth abroad.

\* \* \*

In 1920, after the defeat in the Ukrainian struggle for independence, about 80–100,000 Ukrainians, most of them from Central and Eastern Ukraine, were forced to seek refuge abroad. The majority of these political émigrés were soldiers in Ukrainian armies that had retreated to the West. For the most part, they were interned in 1920 in Polish and (to a lesser extent) Czech camps. Another segment of the Ukrainian political emigration were members and officials of the various Ukrainian governments, who were usually accompanied by their families. Others still were those who, for a variety of reasons, did not desire to live in either Soviet Ukraine or Polish-occupied Eastern Galicia. A relatively large percentage of these émigrés were members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, especially from Central and Eastern Ukraine. By the mid-1920s, most had congregated in Czechoslovakia, especially in Prague and its environs, thanks to the hospitality that the Czechoslovak government and its president, Tomáš Masaryk, had extended to them.

While not subject to the repressive policies of the Soviets or the Poles, the circumstances in which these émigrés lived were nevertheless often demoralizing. Their material conditions were generally poor and difficult to improve, because jobs were scarce, especially after the Depression in 1929. Except for Prague and its environs, the émigré communities were neither large nor stable, with their members, especially the youth, often

moving about in search of better opportunities. Most of the émigrés remained stateless, that is, they could not become citizens of the countries in which they took refuge. This added greatly to their sense of insecurity, and as is often the case in émigré communities, they were agitated by ongoing conflicts, both ideological and personal. The depressing fact that Ukrainians had lost their struggle for independence weighed heavily on morale.

On the positive side, however, the émigrés did have among them many well-educated and highly committed activists who were determined to avoid the mistakes of the past and who wished to raise a new generation of constructive and patriotic individuals. In scouting in general, and in Plast in particular, they saw a promising means of reaching this goal, especially since it seemed to offer an effective response to the prevailing cynicism and pessimism of the post-1920 era.

At this juncture, Ukrainian scouting developed in a totally new environment: it had to function in foreign lands, after a crushing defeat, in conditions of insecurity, instability, and material hardship. Moreover, it had to develop an ethos of serving the homeland from abroad. Thus, Plast introduced a new phenomenon to the worldwide scouting movement—diaspora scouts.

## **Early diaspora scouts**

The first scouting units appeared in 1920, in the Polish internment camps for Ukrainian émigrés in Łańcut and Tarnów, where schools were established for several hundred orphaned children. E. Lokhanko, who had led scout troops in Kyiv, introduced scouting activities to the orphans. But the camps were soon disbanded, so this initial effort produced few results.

It was in Czechoslovakia that more lasting Plast activities took root. A number of Ukrainian educational institutions such as the Ukrainian Free University and the Higher Pedagogical Institute (Teachers' College) in Prague, as well as the Ukrainian Husbandry Academy (Agricultural College) in Poděbrady, were established in the early 1920s. And in 1924, there were almost 2,000 Ukrainian students in Czechoslovakia's institutions of higher learning. A Ukrainian gymnasium was also founded in Prague in 1925, and moved to nearby Řevnice in 1927. These institutions attracted hundreds of young Ukrainians, thereby providing fertile ground for Plast.

The first groups were organized by Eastern Ukrainian scoutmasters, including Yu. Honcharenko and E. Slabchenko. In 1921, the former established a club for adult scouts in Prague, essentially a group of young men, some with military experience. After two years, the group grew to

21 members, divided into three patrols. A second group was organized in 1922 in Poděbrady among students of the agricultural college, and a third group appeared soon afterwards among the students of the teachers' college in Prague. They followed general scouting principles and did not refer to themselves as Plast. The appearance of these groups of scouts was sporadic and uncoordinated, but only in the mid-1920s; later on, contacts with Galician Plast members, both in Prague and in Lviv, became closer.

The striking feature of these early scouting groups was the relatively advanced age of their members—many were over twenty years old. This reflected the fact that young children were relatively scarce among the émigrés, and the number of young men was disproportionately large. At the outset, these patrols used the Czech Scouts, who were very supportive, as their model. Indeed, they became autonomous affiliates of the Czech scouting organization. Because the Ukrainian patrols consisted initially of older scouts, they pioneered the establishment of an International Senior Scout Council in Czechoslovakia. However, the desire to have a distinctly Ukrainian scouting organization was evident from the outset.

In 1925, at the initiative of a student, Yaroslav Ivantyshyn, the Ukrainian Plast Command (*Ukrainska plastova komanda*, or UPK) was established in Prague. It adopted the Galician Plast as its model and sought to unite and coordinate the activities of the various Ukrainian scout patrols in Czechoslovakia. It also accepted the authority of the (*Verkhovna plastova komanda*, or VPK) in Lviv. This was, however, merely a theoretical or symbolic relationship, for distance and communication problems limited the contacts between the UPK and VPK, and after 1930 they practically ceased. Moreover, the fact that the Ukrainian scouts in Czechoslovakia were affiliated with two different scouting organizations, the Czech and the Galician Ukrainian, confused matters further. In effect, the UPK in Prague enjoyed a large degree of autonomy.

## New phase after 1930: SUPE

After Plast was banned in Eastern Galicia, and especially after tensions with the Czech scouting organization developed, the UPK resolved to transform itself into an independent organization. After repeated attempts, it finally received a separate charter from the Czechoslovak government—the right to function as a independent organization. On 2 November 1930, representatives of 11 scout troops met in Prague and proclaimed the creation of the Union of Ukrainian Émigré Scouts (*Soiuz ukrainskykh plastuniv-emigrantiv*, or SUPE), and elected D. Kozytzky



*SUPE leaders, 1932.*

as its first leader. According to its charter, the SUPE goals were: (1) utilize scouting as a method of fostering the spiritual, physical, and moral resources of Ukrainian youth in the diaspora; (2) unite Ukrainian scouts abroad; and (3) represent Ukrainian scouting at the international level. The charter also stated that Plast was a non-political organization. Succeeding Kozytsky were: E. Verbovyi (1932), I. Chmola (1933), E. Gut-Kulchytsky (1934), and R. Lisovsky (1935–39).

Although SUPE accepted the Galician Plast rules and directives and depended heavily on its literature, there were some differences that reflected local particularities. One was related to alcohol and smoking. These were prohibited by Plast in Galicia to all its members, regardless of age. SUPE, on the other hand, citing the Czech model, allowed smoking and the use of alcohol for those who were over 18. Given the much older membership in SUPE, this was not an unexpected deviation. The uniforms of SUPE members also varied somewhat from those in Galicia.

SUPE had a positive impact on the expansion of Ukrainian scouting abroad, as reflected in membership statistics:

1925	4 patrols	43 members
SUPE 1927 effect	7 patrols	141 members
1930	16 patrols	224 members
1936	n.d.	289 members

Most members of SUPE were concentrated in the vicinity of Prague; in 1931, there were three patrols in Prague itself and seven patrols in nearby Řevnice, where the Ukrainian Gymnasium was located; in addition, there were two patrols in Paris and one each in Bern, Danzig, and

Krakow. The preponderance of older scouts in SUPE continued: in 1932 the SUPE office reported that of its 16 member scout patrols, 10 were adult scouts, four were boy and girl scouts, and only two were junior scouts.

Given the tendency of the young Ukrainians to move about in search of opportunities to work or study—often called student migrations—new groups also appeared in places such as Zagreb, Graz, Vienna, Berlin, and Chalet (France), and disappeared in others such as Bern and Danzig. When attractive opportunities to study appeared in 1934 at Louvain University, some of the students moved to Belgium and formed a Plast patrol there. SUPE also established contacts with the few Plast patrols that had appeared by then in the USA and Canada.

## Activities

The first major activity that SUPE undertook after its founding was to organize a widespread protest against the banning of Plast by the Polish regime in Galicia. In the fall of 1930 the organization prepared a letter of protest in Ukrainian, Czech, English, and German and sent it out to 300 international and government institutions all over the world. It appeared in all the Ukrainian papers abroad, as well as a number of non-Ukrainian publications. At every scouting event held in Czechoslovakia or internationally, SUPE members repeatedly drew attention to the fate of Plast in Eastern Galicia. While these efforts did not change the situation, they did raise the issue at the international level and strengthened solidarity between Ukrainian scouts in Eastern Galicia and abroad.

Other noteworthy events were the 20th anniversary of Plast, which was marked in Prague in 1932, and the exhibition of Plast publications that was organized by SUPE in Prague in 1935. It included 420 separate Plast publications, manuals, storybooks, calendars, and periodicals. The prolific publishing activity of Plast members surprised and impressed the many Ukrainian and Czech visitors. Yet another event, even greater in scope, was the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of Plast, which took place in Prague on 28–29 November 1936. Various activities and exhibitions attracted considerable attention, including that of many scouting organizations from abroad. To add to this publicity, a series of postcards reflecting Plast themes was issued. An especially noteworthy aspect of these festivities was that Yaro Hladkyi, representing the Clandestine Plast in Lviv, made an illegal and dangerous trip across the Carpathians in order to greet his fellow scouts in Prague.





### Розвій пластової Ідеології.

«Думайте наперед, як можете допомогти своїй імперії.» Бейден-Пауел.



Це було стимулом Бейден-Пауела, коли він творив орден модернього лицарства під назвою «Скавтінг». Скавтінг повстав в добі, коли англійська корона сліпнула своїм блиском увесь світ. Коли сонце не заходило в тій імперії. І як-що генерал Бейден-Пауел вічно повторяв: «Вітчизна на першій місці

своєю широчиною і незрозумілістю задурманювали уми. Це була доба, де на ввипередки спішили служити якомусь абстрактному — всесвітньому братерству, в той час, як пошматована Батьківщина лежала «прибитій дорозі». Але тоді не розуміли, що до всесвітньої родини йдеться через повний розвиток і абсолютну незалежність своєї нації. І тому також, перебираючи таку наскрізь життєву ідею скавтування на наш ґрунт, — мимохіть мусіли пристосовувати до наших специфічних обставин. На ідею

*1936 Issue of SUPE bulletin *Plastovi visti* (Scouting News) commemorating the 25th anniversary of Plast.*

### Publications

Despite limited resources, émigré Plast did not neglect its publishing activity. In 1926, the newly formed УРК in Prague began to issue, initially in typewritten form, the *Visti ukraïnskoï plastovoï komandy* (News of the Ukrainian Plast Command). In 1930 the bulletin appeared in typeset, and in 1934 it was renamed *Plastovi visti*. SUPE also made an effort in 1931 to continue publishing the periodical of the Galician Plast, *Molode zhyttia*. Financial constraints imposed severe limitations on this magazine, which focused on the theoretical and practical aspects of scouting. Only four issues appeared, some funded by donations from individuals such as M. Bazhansky and Y. Makohin (the latter a generous benefactor), with print runs of only 150–80 copies. Individual Plast patrols also put out a variety of typed and hectographic newsletters. In addition, op-ed columns about Plast were featured in a number of émigré newspapers in Europe and North America. In 1934, H. Kozytska established a modest Plast publishing cooperative that produced a number of booklets, including D. Kozytsky's *Plastovyi vporiad* (Plast Drills) and *Iak taboruvaty* (How to Camp). It also put out a series of stamps and postcards designed by M. Hryhoriev. A bibliography of Ukrainian scout literature was published, containing 176 entries.

*Jamborees and international contacts*

Throughout the 1920s, and especially the 1930s, SUPE made a special effort to send its representatives to all the major scout jamborees, particularly those held in Eastern Europe. Such large-scale gatherings were viewed as an ideal opportunity to show the Ukrainian flag, as well



*Parading through Prague at the time of the 3rd SUPE Conference, 1932.*



*Plast group from Zhevnytsi at Slavic Jamboree in Prague, 1931.*

as focus the attention of the international scouting community on the repression of Ukrainian scouting in Polish-occupied Eastern Galicia. To fund the presence of Ukrainian scouts at the jamborees, the *Plast-pryiat* auxiliary and other community groups organized funding drives throughout the diaspora. In 1923 a single Ukrainian scout, S. Panchak, was sent from Prague to a jamboree in England. Six years later, in the first international jamboree, three Ukrainian scoutmasters, L. Bachynsky, K. Podilsky, and B. Alishkevych-Kaniuk, participated in the 55,000-strong gathering. In 1931, SUPE sent a 53-member delegation (36 males, 17 females) to the First Slavic Scout jamboree in Prague, which attracted 15,000 participants and marked the 25th anniversary of scouting in Czechoslovakia. Perhaps the greatest success was achieved at the large jamboree held in Gödöllő near Budapest, where a 57-member delegation (35 males, 22 females) of SUPE and Transcarpathian Ukrainian scouts made a remarkable impact on the 30,000 participants.

At these jamborees, Ukrainian scouts were usually honorary guests rather than fully accredited participants, because their organization was not recognized by the World Scouting Bureau. But this did not prevent Ukrainian Plast members, who were usually sponsored by the Czechs, from marching in the parades under the Ukrainian flag, much to the irritation of the Polish delegation. To attract attention, the Ukrainians invariably made effective use of colorful Ukrainian folklore, especially dancing and singing, to win the sympathies of fellow scouts. The Czechs, who had strong pan-Slavic sympathies, were especially enthusiastic about the performances of the Ukrainian scouts.

Yet despite their presence at the jamborees and repeated protestations to the World Scouting Bureau in London, Ukrainian efforts to be

admitted to international scouting bodies met with no success. The formal reason given was always the same: the World Bureau did not admit scouting organizations from stateless nations (although Armenians and Russians were treated as exceptions). In point of fact, the decisive factor behind the rejections from the World Bureau was the extreme pressure exerted on the London office by the large and influential Polish scouting organization. By 1933, SUPE realized that further complaints to the World Scouting Bureau were futile, and ceased its efforts in this area. Regardless of the lack of formal recognition, SUPE developed good relations with the scouting organizations of a number of countries, notably Germany, Austria, Lithuania, France, Yugoslavia, and, of course, Czechoslovakia. Ukrainian scouts often camped with the scouts of other nationalities, and a lively exchange of publications developed between them.

### *Scouting in the Ukrainian diaspora*

The nature of scouting activity among SUPE members depended on the country in which they resided. Since the majority lived in Czechoslovakia, for them conditions were not very different from those in Eastern Galicia. This was especially the case when they camped in the Carpathians, where they were exposed to their own familiar language and customs. Because the Prague-based Ukrainian scouts did not have a permanent camp of their own, much of their camping required lengthy and arduous trips to the Carpathians. For example, in 1933 members of a Prague troop spent an overall total of 222 days hiking and covered over 3,000 km. That year, one group completed a lengthy hike that lasted 30 days and covered 450 km, during which it rained constantly.

Another important feature of scouting activity was the participation of advanced Ukrainian scouts in the *Lisova Shkola* (Forest School), which the Czech scouts organized for their scout leaders and instructors near Prešov (Priashiv). SUPE instituted a selection process to ensure that well-qualified individuals could take part in these rigorous training courses.

A popular form of scouting was also maritime scouting. In Prague a patrol devoted itself to developing sailing and paddling skills. It had the benefit of having former officers of the Ukrainian Black Sea fleet serve as their instructors. Later, a Plast patrol founded in Chalet, France, regularly organized Ukrainian Black Sea festivals marking the creation of the Ukrainian fleet in 1918 and attracted many observers from Chalet. In Lyon, a sea patrol, sporting sailor uniforms, was founded in 1928. Plast activities in the cities were usually a mixture of scouting and patriotic

**Excerpt from a SUPE communiqué, Prague, June 1931**

But our relations with Sváz—the Czechoslovak scouting movement—have changed recently. In order to maintain friendly and neighbourly ties with Polish scouting, and in order to accommodate the Polish scouts from Silesia who were recently accepted into Sváz, adopted the following resolutions at the joint Czech-Polish conference in Katowice: (1) In its letters to the Polish Scouting Union and to the World Bureau, Sváz will denounce the actions of the Ukrainian émigré pseudo-scout organization in Czechoslovakia, which vilify Poland in the eyes of the scouting organizations of the world; and (2) Sváz guarantees that during the Prague festivities (a planned pan-Slavic scout jamboree), the Ukrainian issue will not be discussed in either internal or external forums [...]

In order to gain greater freedom of action and consolidate all émigré scouts wherever they may be (not only those in Czechoslovakia who belong to Sváz), we have created an independent scouting organization, the Union of Émigré Scouts of Ukraine, whose charter the Czech government recently ratified. Of course, we are not changing our policy. We want, above all, to be good scouts who treat others justly. But we also expect to be treated fairly. We want to be the brothers of all scouts in the world, but only when they also treat us in a brotherly fashion. Obviously, we—like all the scouts in the world—love our own Ukrainian nation, and we will always work on its behalf. Despite everything, we continue to view Sváz with respect, and will try to continue living with them in a fraternal relationship. All depends on their behavior towards us.

undertakings. The rover-rank scouts in Prague established their own specialized patrols, each of which concentrated on developing skills and passing tests in areas such as photography, foreign languages, aeronautics, and Ukrainian history and culture.

An especially dynamic group was the female scout sorority *Ukraïna*, which established a highly patriotic and intellectually challenging program. During the first half of their weekly meetings, they would discuss foreign scouting periodicals, and work on establishing and maintaining contact with scouts throughout Europe. In the second half, they concentrated on Ukrainian topics, especially history and current affairs. A special focus of their activity was the struggle against assimilation among young Ukrainian scouts. For this purpose, they collected an extensive library

and sent Ukrainian-language publications to patrols in distant or isolated areas. In general, SUPE promoted the widespread practice of establishing mini-libraries dealing with scouting and Ukrainian topics.

Another active adult scout fraternity was the *Burlaky* (Vagabonds), established in 1930 and consisting mostly of former scouts from Eastern Galicia who had come to Czechoslovakia to study. Initially, they were viewed as outsiders by other émigrés. As observed by one of their leaders, “people did not understand us, they were apprehensive and did not want to acknowledge us.” But their hard work gained the respect of fellow scouts. This was reflected in an impressive ceremony of blessing their fraternity banner, attended by over 200, including many leaders of the Prague Ukrainian community. In order to show respect and to instill patriotism among their members, Plast groups often visited and cared for the graves of Ukrainian soldiers and community leaders. In Prague, the Ukrainian Museum of the Liberation Struggle was a frequent destination for Plast members, as was the grave of Symon Petliura in Paris. Indeed, Plast gave all forms of propagating the Ukrainian cause a high priority.

An important factor in the development of Ukrainian scouting in Czechoslovakia was the support and encouragement that it received, especially at the outset, from the Czech scouting association Sváz. But after the events of the 1930s, relations turned for the worse. Polish scouts in Czechoslovakia far outnumbered the Ukrainians, and they used this fact to convince the Czech association, in December 1930, to adopt an anti-Ukrainian position. Although within a month the Czechs took a much more conciliatory tone towards the Ukrainians, tensions remained and the Czech-Ukrainian relationship became more strained. Indeed, as noted above, this conflict had been a major reason for the creation of SUPE.

Frankly, other problems were of the Ukrainians’ own making. In 1933, an ideological conflict arose among its members. At issue was the question of what kind of activities should receive more emphasis, those related to scouting or to nationalism. After a heated debate, most SUPE leaders decided that the British approach, which stressed that scouting was preferable. And they reiterated the view that Plast was not a political organization and should not take part in the party and ideological struggles that were rampant among the émigrés. This led to the resignation of a number of activists from SUPE.

Another defection was the abovementioned sorority of female scout-seniors, *Ukraïna*. They took the position that it was time to stop concentrating on folklore themes and pay more attention to national-oriented activities. After cutting their ties with SUPE, they became affiliated with the

Czech scouting organization. To make matters worse, the group attempted (unsuccessfully) to create an alternative Ukrainian scouting organization. This conflict, and others like it, was an all-too-frequent occurrence in SUPE.

Most disquieting, however, was a problem that all émigré communities have to face: assimilation. It started in the 1930s, with the new generation of scouts who were born abroad. The most obvious reflection (painful for the older generation) of the unavoidable assimilatory process was the alarming decline in knowledge of Ukrainian among youths. This was especially evident in the few Plast patrols that had already been established in the USA. Exposed to the “Melting Pot” of American culture, young Ukrainians there were especially quick to assimilate into American society. For example, in 1930 a young Canadian girl scout from Toronto wrote a distressed letter to the VPK in Lviv, noting her disillusionment, while attending a scout jamboree in England, when she met a group of Plast members from the USA who spoke only English and knew no Ukrainian.

Ukrainian communities in Czechoslovakia encountered similar problems. In December 1931, Mykola Tovt from Bratislava wrote to SUPE that he intended to organize a Plast unit because he could no longer watch the de-nationalization of Ukrainian children and the inertness of their parents. SUPE assigned several Plast members to help him in his efforts. A girls’ patrol was established in Bratislava, but of the 11 members, aged 6–14, only two could speak Ukrainian. As ever more children were foreign-born and knew their country of origin only secondhand, SUPE faced the problem of a shrinking demographic base, and was unable to resolve it.

SUPE also provided a coordinating and advising function for Plast units in the Ukrainian communities of Western Europe and North America. Given their relatively large size, the immigrant communities in America and Canada appeared to offer especially promising opportunities for growth. In the USA, the first groups appeared in the early

### **Letters from America to SUPE**

From a 1933 letter by S. Perestiuk: “The organization of Plast in New York is not moving ahead as we expected. Our youth here prefers to enroll in similar American [scouting] organizations, which obviously have more attractive facilities than Ukrainian Plast can offer.”<sup>1</sup>

Another Ukrainian community activist wrote in 1934 that “it is difficult for us Ukrainians to organize anything here; firstly, our youth is becoming ever more alienated, and secondly, we lack educated people with strong character...”<sup>2</sup>

1920s. Two troops, one each for boys and girls, were organized in New York in 1922 by immigrants from Eastern Ukraine, B. Kashtaniuk and K. Shutiak, and a Plast member formerly from Prague, R. Riznyk. Next year, two more troops were established in Philadelphia under the leadership of M. Ryban, and units also reported from the Ukrainian centers in Brooklyn and Edmund. An attempt to create Plast units was made in the early 1930s by S. Perstiuk, who had been a member of Plast in Galicia. She organized two large co-ed troops, one in New York numbering 30 girls and 10 boys, and another in Jersey City with 30 girls and 20 boys; other units appeared in Philadelphia and Yonkers. But because they had no contacts with Plast in Ukraine, all these groups utilized American materials and were quickly assimilated into American scouting.

For its part, strong support came from the Ukrainian press, especially the daily *Svoboda* (Freedom), which frequently printed articles supporting Plast as an antidote to assimilation. In 1935, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists wrote to SUPE to inform it of its intention to establish Plast patrols as youth affiliates of its organization. Also, the Ukrainian Orthodox church expressed an interest in such youth groups. But despite widespread support, Plast did not develop. Part of the problem was the lack of suitable leaders, literature, and facilities. In comparison, American scouting was too attractive to resist. Another problem was that the Plast program often tended to be strongly nationalistic, stressing Ukraine-oriented themes while almost ignoring scouting topics and activities. Finally, rapid assimilation discouraged involvement in Plast. As a result, these Plast units soon disbanded, with many of their members joining the American scouts, while some enrolled in Ukrainian nationalistic organizations.

The situation in Canada was similar for that period. Several Plast patrols were organized in Yorkton, Edmonton, Oshawa, and Toronto, where organizations such as the veterans' association *Striletska Hromada*, as well as the Ukrainian Byzantine-rite Catholic church, offered their support. But for many of the same reasons as in the USA, Plast failed to gain a foothold.

In France, where in the 1930s the Ukrainian émigré community had been enlarged by an influx of Ukrainian workers from Eastern Galicia, Plast had greater success. In the 1920s, several small groups were organized by the veteran scoutmaster from Eastern Ukraine, O. Yaremchenko, but they soon disbanded. In 1937, largely through the efforts of S. Nechai, the Congress of Ukrainian Organizations in France urged Ukrainian communities to establish Plast units and mailed out supporting materials to Ukrainian-language schools. In 1938 a patrol of adult scouts and two patrols of boy and girl scouts were organized in Paris.





*Plast group in France, 1938.*

Among the Plast activists in that city was Olena Petliura, daughter of the assassinated Ukrainian leader, Symon Petliura. A very active patrol of sea-scouts functioned in Lyon, and a number of fairly large patrols appeared in Alsace-Lorraine, especially in the town of Chalet. It was there that Plast obtained the use of some land and, in 1938, established the first permanent camp in France. It was organized on the Galician model, and had 57 participants, most under 15 years of age. Its camp director was S. Siropolko from Prague, who was assigned by SUPB, and the counselors were teachers from local Ukrainian-language schools. Plast also managed to publish, for a brief period, a newsletter and a journal. However, the coming war and the limited potential of the Ukrainian communities discouraged any further growth of Plast in France.

Despite the fact that Poland proper had relatively large Ukrainian communities, for obvious reasons Plast could not develop there. An exception was an active adult scout troop consisting of Ukrainian students, many from Stryi and former members of the *Chervona Kalyna* fraternity, who attended the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. In the early 1930s, the troop had a membership of about 70, of whom 30 were women. It organized frequent hikes and camping trips, collected a large library of Plast literature, and even had a choir. It also worked on teaching the children of Ukrainian émigrés about things Ukrainian, in order to slow the process of assimilation. Indeed, this unit was the most dynamic element in the Ukrainian community in Krakow. However, after Plast was banned in Eastern Galicia, the university authorities ordered the troop to disband. Instead, it continued its activities surreptitiously, under the guise of a hik-

ing organization. However, when the OUN assassinated Bronisław Pieracki, the Polish interior minister, in 1934, 23 members of the troop were arrested and interrogated. Thereafter, this unit ceased to exist.

## The nature of Plast activities abroad

Ukrainian scouting abroad took on a somewhat different character than in Eastern Galicia. A major concern of Ukrainian parents living abroad, especially those who were patriotically inclined, was the rapid assimilation of their children into the cultures of their new host countries. Therefore, in most émigré communities Plast was seen, first and foremost, as an effective means of warding off or delaying the process of assimilation, and of maintaining the loyalty of the young to the cause of an independent Ukraine. Consequently, in 1933 SUPE amended the organization's oath so that its first point was: "I swear to honor my homeland and my people, and to aid them whenever and however I can." Since this required a thorough knowledge of Ukraine, its history, and culture, acquiring this knowledge became a major focus of Plast activity.

In their weekly meetings, Plast scout patrols learned about Ukraine and concentrated on developing their Ukrainian language skills. When choosing skills that were to be their speciality—such as, for example, telegraph or radio communications—patrols would do so keeping in mind skills that might be useful in the future struggle for an independent Ukraine. Plast scouts were also encouraged to collect libraries of Ukrainian books; some, such as a patrol in Zhevnytsi, amassed a collection of several hundred volumes. Diaspora scouts also participated in all national celebrations, such as the commemorations of the 01 November Uprising and the Battle of Kruty, that were organized by Ukrainian communities. Not only did Plast strive to deepen its members' knowledge about and commitment to Ukraine, it also sought to provide a Ukrainian environment, including Ukrainian friends, for the immigrant youth. Cultural activities, therefore, became an especially important part of the Plast program abroad.

Obviously, scouting as such remained a central part of Plast activities. But its program also had a strongly national dimension. For example, patrols of sea scouts—there were several in Prague and, later, in France—studied Ukrainian naval history and organized Black Sea celebrations. Hiking and camping invariably took place in the Carpathian Mountains, not only because the region was well suited for such activities but also because it was the only ethnographic Ukrainian area accessible to Plast members abroad.



*Plast Ukrainian scouts who studied the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.*

In the Ukrainian émigré communities in Europe, Plast was the paramount youth organization, and its contributions were greatly appreciated. It was one of the few organizations that did not become embroiled in the political and ideological conflicts that were standard feature of these communities. And it was successful in attracting youth into its ranks, a notable accomplishment in view of the economically difficult, politically unstable, and psychologically depressed émigré environment in which it existed.

\* \* \*

Despite the brevity of its existence and the small number of people involved, the SUPE era was an important one in Plast's history. For the first time, a scouting organization encountered the unique difficulties of functioning in the diaspora. It was a situation where the attractions of scouting were used not only to build character but also to an unprecedented end—maintaining a national identity in the diaspora. During this troubled period, Plast was indisputably in the forefront of the Ukrainian diaspora's struggle to preserve in its youth a sense of identity linked to its ancestral homeland.

## Chapter 6

# Second World War

In the autochthonous lands of the Ukrainians, WWII was especially cataclysmic and brutal. Ukraine had the misfortune of being the primary battleground between the Nazis and the Soviets. Not only was it exposed to the chaos and devastation of war, Ukraine also experienced the brutal occupation of two totalitarian powers. Under these circumstances, the re-emergence of a patriotic, character-building organization such as Plast could hardly be expected. It could certainly not occur in Soviet-occupied territories, because the Soviets permitted only their own youth organizations to function. In German-occupied Western Ukraine, the situation was somewhat different. While the Germans did not allow the revival of Plast, they also did not impose their types of youth organizations on Western Ukrainians. This allowed the formation of youth organizations that, while not formally considered to be Plast, were nonetheless modeled on and influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by Plast and its activists.

\* \* \*

During the first phase of the Second World War in Eastern Europe, Galicia came under Soviet control from September 1939 to June 1941; meanwhile, such westernmost areas as the Lemko, Yaroslav (Jarosław), and Kholm (Chełm) regions, as part of the lands formerly belonging to Poland, were incorporated into the German-administered Generalgouvernement. A tightly guarded border separated the two zones of occupation. Meanwhile, Transcarpathia was absorbed into Hungary.

### Soviet zone

In Soviet-occupied Eastern Galicia, the re-emergence of Plast was not an option because of Soviet antagonism to “bourgeois” organizations. Indeed, even past participation in Plast activities could expose one to persecution and even death. Under these conditions, the Plast Center—which in 1939–41 consisted of Yaro Hladkyi, Bohdan Plaviuk, Roman Olesnytsky, Bohdan Khamula, Andrij Piaseckyj, Hanka Korenets, Bohdan Sitnytsky, Tsiopa Palijiw, and Serhii Kostetsky—did not disband, but it did limit its activities and became even more conspiratorial. However, even this did not prevent some Plast activists having to pay the ultimate price.

In order to maintain contact with their colleagues, Plast activists had to cross the heavily guarded German-Soviet border. In doing so, Serhii Kostetsky and Dionisii Chornega were killed, while Volodymyr Kashytsky and M. Soroka were arrested and sent to Soviet concentration camps. Others—such as Bohdan Plaviuk, Bohdan Khamula, and Ostap Struk—were arrested and executed by the Soviets in June 1941. The Soviet occupation of Eastern Galicia was also fatal for two of the three founders of Plast—Chmola and Franko. Both were arrested in 1941. Chmola was executed in Drohobych, while Franko was last seen in the custody of the NKVD. In general, all those who had been active in the past in Ukrainian organizations and institutions were marked by Soviets for repressive measures and even execution. Because Plast members were usually engaged in a variety of social, cultural, and political activities in addition to their work in Plast, they were especially vulnerable to Soviet persecution.

In order to avoid repression by the Soviets, approximately 30,000 Ukrainians from Eastern Galicia, mostly from the intelligentsia, fled to the German-ruled Generalgouvernement, namely, to the Lemko, Kholm, and Podlachia (*Pidliashshia*) regions, as well as to the city of Krakow. Most of these émigrés were nationally committed and experienced community activists. It was mostly they who would man the infrastructure of the Ukrainian DP institutions that developed in these regions.

**Recollection from the war years of a rank-and-file  
Plast member, Olha Zarytska**

Such was the fate of our scouts (plastuny): Mykhailo Hnativ, who worked with Zenon Kosak in the underground, fled to the West; Mykola Dragan was imprisoned in Bolshevik jails; Hanna Lavriv was exiled with her family to Siberia; Maria Huzychak became a prisoner in Polish jails, and was twice deported to Siberia; Ivan Krysko, our sports instructor, was executed by the Bolshevik NKVD; the brothers Mykola and Mykhailo Vrublivsky, were executed; Petro Dragan was executed; his brothers Mykola and Vasyl were executed; Roman and Dmytro Zarytsky died in the forest (as members of the Ukrainian underground—*Auth.*); Orest Ilkiv, a member of UPA, was killed while in hiding; Stepan Koroliuk was executed. Teodor Muila and Vasyl Koroliuk were killed in the forest. The story is far from being complete—in fact, this recollection is only from Tustanovychi-Boryslav. Now a large grave stands for them in our cemetery. How beautiful our Ukraine would be if such people were still alive today.<sup>1</sup>

## Nazi zone: Generalgouvernement in 1939–41

About 500,000 Ukrainians—the majority of them politically and nationally embryonic peasants—lived in the Lemko, Kholm and Podlachia regions under German control. This number was enlarged by a wave of about 30,000 refugees from Galicia. The Germans allowed only one organization to represent all the Ukrainians in their zone of occupation—the Krakow-based Ukrainian Central Committee (UCC), led by Professor Volodymyr Kubijovyč. However, this centralized social services organization was allowed to have a variety of sub-sections, one of which concentrated on youth.

Working with youth was a priority for the UCC, since under the Polish regime, young people in the region had been isolated from any Ukrainian contact with Eastern Galicia and significantly exposed to Polonization. Moreover, their educational level was generally quite low. Therefore, the goal of the UCC was to develop educational facilities and awaken or strengthen national consciousness among the young. It was, as Kubijovyč stated, “a struggle for the soul of the younger generation—namely, for the Ukrainian character of our peripheral lands in the future.”<sup>2</sup>

What was envisaged was the creation of a single organization that would encompass all age groups, from childhood to young adults, and would foster the well-rounded development of each individual. There were, however, significant obstacles. Firstly—unlike Galicia, which had had a variety of youth-oriented organizations—in the lands beyond the Sian River youth organizations among the overwhelmingly rural Ukrainians were practically nonexistent. Secondly, the impact of the Galician refugees was not uniformly positive. Their expertise in community and organization work was undeniable, and it was essential in establishing Ukrainian organizations in the area. But they also brought with them political divisions, especially those associated with the recently ignited conflict between the Bandera and Melnyk factions of the OUN; the attempts of each faction to influence youth organizations greatly compli-



*Kekelija (Cecilia) “Tsiopa” Palijiw, 1942. She was a member of Plast Center, which did not disband in 1939–41 but became even more conspiratorial under Soviet rule.*

cated the UCC's as well as others' efforts in this area. Finally, German authorities and policies themselves created major problems. Under these circumstances, it was difficult to establish a Plast-type organization for youth with emphasis on character-building. The best that the Plast activists among the Galician émigrés could hope for was that some elements of the scouting program would be utilized in any newly formed youth organization.

In March 1940, Yaroslav Rak, a Clandestine Plast activist, was assigned to develop the youth organization among Ukrainians in the Generalgouvernement. However, conflicts between him and the German authorities quickly developed, and he resigned (and was later sent to Auschwitz). His place was taken by a Prosvita leader, Volodymyr Tatomyr. Attracted by the novelty of youth organizations, the young people in these regions responded positively to calls to join what came to be called the *Kureni Molodi* (Youth Troops, or КМ). By September 1940, 317 Youth Troops were formed. The influence of the Plast model was evident even in how the age groups were subdivided and designated: exactly paralleling Plast, children aged 7–14 were called *novaky* while those aged 14–18 were *yunaky*, and groups of the latter were called *hurtky* (patrols) and *kureni* (troops).

The program of the КМ stressed the basics: in order to raise Ukrainian national consciousness, their leaders, usually Eastern Galician émigrés, had to first teach their members how to read and write in Ukrainian; in order to attract village youth, the КМ offered vocational training in agriculture, driving, first aid, and home economics. Many groups also functioned as fire brigades. Especially popular public events sometimes attracted as many as 1,000 participants.

There was a notable lack of qualified leaders among the indigenous Ukrainians in the region (known as Ruthenians '*Rusyny*'). To address this major problem, two instructors' camps, consisting of about 20 participants each, were organized in the town of Krynytsia (Krynica) in the fall and winter of 1940. Simultaneously, leadership camps for older youths were held throughout the region, with 1,104 participants, 627 boys and 427 girls. By the summer of 1941, the КМ had about 20,500 members, 11,750 male and 8,750 female. Close to 60% were in the boy and girl scout division, that is, aged 14–18. These statistics meant that 8% of all youths in these Ukrainian-inhabited lands between the ages of 7 and 30 belonged to the КМ—an impressive figure considering the almost complete lack of youth organizations prior to the war. This success was short-lived, however. With the outbreak of the German-Soviet war,

most of the Eastern Galicians, who constituted the core of the КМ leadership, returned to their homes. Meanwhile, German forced labor policies siphoned off youths for work in Germany. Consequently, after 1942 the КМ rapidly declined.

What influence did Plast have on this large (although short-lived) organization of Ukrainian youth? Rak clearly attempted to introduce some scouting principles to the КМ. He declared that Plast, as the most successful and effective Ukrainian youth organization, was the model that should be followed. Adopting a controversial position, he also argued that healthy rivalry encouraged youth to strive for excellence, which benefited both them as individuals and their organization.<sup>3</sup>

Plast influence was also evident in other КМ youth groups that were led by long-time Plast activists such as Bachynsky (in Yaroslav) and Hanushevsky (in Sianok).

## **Mentoring Society of Ukrainian Youth** **(*Vykhovna spilnota ukraïnskoï molodi, or vsUM*)**

When the Nazi-Soviet War broke out on 21 June 1941, the Germans quickly expelled the Soviets from Eastern Galicia and incorporated much of the region into the Generalgouvernement. Thousands of Ukrainians who had fled across the Sian River to escape Soviet rule now returned to Eastern Galicia. A Ukrainian social services organization, chaired by Kost Pankivsky, was formed in Lviv, though it was eventually subordinated to the central office of the UCC based in Krakow, which was led by Kubijovyč. From 1941 to 1944, all matters dealing with the education and development of Ukrainian youth in the Generalgouvernement would lie within the purview of the Krakow central office of UCC and its Lviv affiliate.

It was clear that the Germans would not agree to the re-emergence of a scouting organization like Plast. For instance, in October 1939, M. Ivanenko attempted to establish a Plast group in Sianok, but the German authorities ordered it to disband. Nonetheless, both Kubijovyč and Pankivsky were of the opinion that Plast, even if not formally recognized, was still the best model to follow in establishing a youth organization in German-occupied Galicia. Metropolitan Andrei (Sheptytsky) also indicated that he supported the creation of a Plast-type organization. Therefore, the Ukrainian goal became to create, under UCC auspices, an organization that was directly modeled on Plast even though it was not allowed to call itself Plast.



As might be expected, this undertaking attracted the Plast activists who had survived the Soviet occupation. At a conference held in July 1941, the Plast Center was reconstituted, with membership including Hladkyi, Olesnytsky, Starosolsky, Piaseckyj, Palijiw, Korenets, Iryna Khoïnatska, Bohdan Chaikivsky, Tymish Bilostotsky, and Rak. But because it was unclear what policies the Germans would pursue, it was decided that the group should remain clandestine, although individual members could take on active, even leading, roles in other youth organizations. Initially, the model used was the КМ from the 1939–41 period. Subsequently, at a conference held in January–February 1942, Levytsky, who was appointed to a leading position in the UCC youth and education section, tabled a proposal titled “A New Form of Youth Organization”; not surprisingly, it was almost completely modeled on Plast.

His proposal was accepted by the UCC, and Plast activists were assigned leading positions in the proposed organization. Levytsky was to be the leader, while Korenets was to be responsible for the girls’ section and Seniv for the boys. A policymaking body associated with UCC, called the *Vykhovna Rada* (Mentoring Council), was chaired by Tysovsky and provided directives for the new organization. Thus, not only the concept of the new organization but the actual leadership was firmly in the hands of leading Plast activists.

The proposed organization comprised the same divisions as Plast had, and it was even suggested that the names and numeration of the troops in each town be the same as in the days of legal Plast; however, the idea was dropped for fear that it might provoke the Germans. The proposal for the new organization was submitted to the authorities, and in June 1942 they approved it, which was given the name *Vykhovna spilnota ukraïnskoï molodi* (Mentoring Society of Ukrainian Youth, or VSUM).

Once it was confirmed by the German authorities, VSUM was able to organize in schools, something that Plast had been prevented from doing after 1924. As it happened, this restriction ended up as an advantage, for now it was the schools—especially the gymnasia (high schools), which were managed by Ukrainians—that provided the majority of the VSUM membership. A key factor was that only students with good grades were allowed to join. Moreover, the appointed or volunteer leaders and guardians of the VSUM units were now teachers, many of them former scouts.

The schools also provided VSUM with premises where regular meetings and other activities could take place. The organization grew steadily if not extensively, with 61 sections and 2,555 members by 1943.



*VSUM camp at Pasichna, under German occupation in 1942–44. Plast activities were carried out under the auspices of the Mentoring Society of Ukrainian Youth (Vykhovna spilnota ukrainskoi molodi, or vsum).*

## Camps

As might be expected, camping was the cornerstone of vsum activity. Even before it was officially registered, a scout leadership camp, modeled on the one held by Plast in 1930, was organized in Krynytsia in April–May 1942. Larger scout leadership camps were held in September–October 1942 in Briukhovychi, and in 1943 in Hostynnyi Dvir, near Lviv. The participants in these camps (numbering 60–130 at each) were led by Plast veterans such as Palijiw and Bilostotsky. Others who helped to organize and conduct these camps were O. Tysovsky, S. Levyt-sky, Khoinat-ska, Chaikivsky, and Tselevych. Among the instructors were leading intellectuals and community activists, such as M. Konovalets, B. Starosolsky, and M. Shlemkevych.

Even before vsum, a camp for about 100 boys, led by the Plast activist Popovych, was held at Pasichna in August 1941. Once vsum was established, the number of participants in the youth camps grew quickly. By the fall of 1942, about 22 sections sent over 600 teenage boys to camps at Pasichna, Kamianka-Strumilova, Kosiv, Buzhany, and Synevyr, and girls to camps at Butsniv, Myshkovychi, and Ptyche; a co-ed camp at Shklo was led by Yuriy Starosolsky and Uliana Sitnytska, and run according to Plast programs and directives.

In the winter of 1941–42, about 30 youths participated in a ski camp at Briukhovychi that was led by T. Bilostotsky. There was even a sailing/paddling camp, organized by the *Chornomortsi* fraternity in Ny-zhniv and led by M. Zaklynsky and I. Kostelnyk.

The programs at these camps were much like those in the Plast camps of the 1920s. The daily regimen was almost identical and focused on obtaining badges and increasing scouting skills. However, the war did force certain changes. For example, hikes were usually one or two days in duration at the most, because with Soviet partisans in the region, it was too dangerous to go further afield. For the same reason, assemblies were only local in scale, limited to vsUM members from neighboring towns.

Probably the largest gathering, numbering about 200 youths, was held 6–7 June 1942 in Sambir. It was attended by Levytsky and Palijiw as well as scouts from Stryi, Kolomyia, and Lviv. Its motto was “Develop Your Character and Worldview,” and a highlight of the assembly was a march through Sambir, during which traditional Plast songs were sung. Plans were made to expand the camping program significantly in the summer of 1943. However, the formation of the Galicia Division, which attracted many of the older scouts who staffed the camps, forced vsUM to abandon its plans of expansion.

### *Conferences*

In order to evaluate their progress and map out their goals, the vsUM activists held several conferences. On 28 December 1943, youth workers from Galicia as well as the Lemko and Kholm regions met in Lviv. Levytsky, Tysovsky, and Palijiw played a leading role at this conference, which was said by Zenon Zeleny, newly appointed director of the youth section of the UCC, to have established “God and Country” as the motto of all Ukrainian youth organizations. The second phase of the conference took place in Lviv on 24 February 1944, when Palijiw, who was secretary for youth affairs at UCC and Plast’s leading activist in vsUM, declared:

We have doubled our organizational staff, tripled the number of sections and members, and deepened and broadened our activities... Life is roiling, time is flying... we dare not abandon our work with youth. What our work in these circumstances demands is better, more idealistic, and more committed scout leaders.<sup>4</sup>

In describing the functions of such leaders, Shlemkevych stated that they should be a “guardian angel who leads children by the hand and

whose crystal-clear character serves as a magnet for youth.”<sup>5</sup> Foreseeing the turbulence that the final stage of the war would bring, Levytsky declared that “it depends on us whether our society will disappear into the vortex of current events or whether it can further strengthen the values created through the efforts of our forefathers.”<sup>6</sup>

### *Ideology*

The impact of the war and the Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine could not but influence the ideological principles on which Plast/vSUM were based. In the 1939–41 period, when Ukrainian youth organizations were formed in the German-occupied Kholm and Lemko regions, Plast organizational and programmatic models were utilized to a certain extent in the КМ. However, there was little stress on character building, which was at the heart of Plast ideology. In these politically and socioeconomically underdeveloped regions, the need, as perceived by the UCC, was to raise national consciousness and emphasize such features as accuracy, self-discipline, and responsibility that would aid the rural population in adapting to modern life. Developing the community and the nation was the foremost concern, with individual development considered to be, at best, a secondary issue.

When the Germans occupied Eastern Galicia (1941–44) and vSUM, with its Plast leadership and program, was organized in 1942, the impact of Plast ideology—particularly its emphasis on development of the individual and his or her character—was much more evident. Articles appeared in the youth-oriented press that focused on the natural need of the individual to develop fully his or her potential. Hiking and camping were encouraged, because such activities brought youths into contact with nature and allowed them not only to acquire practical skills but to develop a sense of freedom and independence.

When Yuriy Starosolsky took over the editorship of the journal *Doroha* (The Road) in February 1942, he declared in an editorial that the journal’s goal was to encourage the creation of “a sovereign individual,” because such a self-possessed and self-motivated individual is an “essential element in the world and the prerequisite for its growth and development.”<sup>7</sup> The journal clearly harkened back to the relatively liberal tone of the scouts during the 1920s. Given the totalitarian nature of the Nazi occupation regime, and the tensions, stresses, and bloody conflicts engendered by the war, these humanistic values, while true to Plast traditions, were in sharp contrast to the tone of the times.

This is not to say that wartime conditions had no impact at all on Plast ideology. While the essentially character-building, liberal, and humanistic core of ideas retained a central position, other ideas and values that had been absent or in the background gained new prominence. Some vsUM activists placed added emphasis on the need to develop leadership skills among the youth, because these were the skills that would be most needed in the current and future struggles. With this came the proliferation of authoritarian tendencies that included strict discipline and automatic obedience to authority.

Clearly, the war introduced a certain militarization. More stress was also placed on collectivism, with vsUM members encouraged to think first and foremost of their nation rather than of themselves. This was motivated by the argument that such characteristics would be needed in the oncoming struggle for national independence and statehood. Thus, two parallel tendencies coexisted: one still stressed the paramount importance of character building, while the other emphasized the need to develop personal traits that would best serve the nation and its struggle for independence.

### *Publishing*

As ever, Plast activists paid close attention to publishing. They were fortunate that in January 1940 the uCC in Krakow established its own publishing house, Ukraïnske Vydavnytstvo, whose directors E. Pelensky and I. Zilinsky were very well disposed to Plast; and O. Tarnavskyj was a member of the Clandestine Plast. In October 1940, the uCC began to publish the monthly *Doroha* journal for youth. In just over three years, 38 issues appeared, each in a run of about 5–7,000. Initially, the journal emphasized information about nature, local lore, and sports. However, when the journal was moved to Lviv in February 1942 and Yurij Starosolsky, a committed Clandestine Plast activist, became its editor, *Doroha* began to focus more and more on issues related to forming the worldview of a new generation. And in doing so, it essentially popularized Plast values and principles.



*Logo of Ukraïnskyi Plast Publishers, Prague.*

By frequently publishing photos of Plast from the 1920s, it sought to remind the youth of the scouting organization that had been banned by the Poles. Meanwhile, in the nationalistically underdeveloped lands beyond the Sian River, which had never had a Ukrainian youth-oriented journal, the publication greatly influenced the development of both personal and national worldviews among the rural youth.

## Plast and vsUM members and the War

Plast in the 1920s, Clandestine Plast in the 1930s, and vsUM during WWII attracted and influenced a significant number of patriotic and highly motivated individuals, with strong beliefs and leadership skills. As might be expected, during the war these individuals were in the forefront of every form of Ukrainian activism, especially in the efforts to defend the Ukrainian cause. In their fervent commitment, many made the ultimate sacrifice.

A group of high school-aged Plast members in Transcarpathia was among the first victims of the war. When the Hungarian army invaded their land, many young Plast members volunteered to join the hastily formed Transcarpathian Defense Forces. On 15 March 1939, a poorly armed unit of 20 scouts, led by their scoutmaster M. Kozychar, marched straight from their school desks to the front lines near Krasne Pole. Faced by overwhelming Hungarian forces, 14 of these youths died in the ensuing battle. Many others Plast members joined the paramilitary Carpathian Sich and also paid with their lives. Despite their youth, Plast members were also active in the Transcarpathian government. Plast member Yulian Revai was minister of foreign affairs in the shortlived state of Carpatho-Ukraine. Indubitably, in times of crisis, Plast members stepped up.

The same was true in Eastern Galicia. During the prewar period, a large number of older scouts entered the ranks of the underground nationalist organization OUN, and soon rose to leadership positions. The most obvious examples are Stepan Bandera, a former member of the Stryi-based *Chervona Kalyna* fraternity, and Roman Shukhevych, an outstanding former member of the Lviv-based *Chornomortsi* fraternity. During the war, Bandera transformed his faction of the OUN into a most forceful expression of Ukrainian nationalism (OUN-B). Meanwhile, his colleague and fellow OUN leader Shukhevych organized the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) into a large, effective, and extremely committed underground army.

Other former Plast scouts were also among the top leadership of both the OUN and the UPA. Mykola Lebed led the OUN-B during part of the war and organized its security apparatus. Reverend Ivan Hryniokh was a leading force in attempts to form an independent Ukrainian government. Lev Rebet was the leading ideologist of the OUN. Working with Shukhevych in the military effort were the former Plast members Dmytro Hrytsai, as chief of staff of the UPA, and such outstanding commanders as Haisyn, V. Sydor, Stebelsky, and Hrabets. A key member of the UPA medical service was Ya. Olesnytsky. Meanwhile, K. Zarytska headed the Ukrainian Red Cross and the women's section of the OUN.

Almost all of them died in battle. In 1950, Shukhevych was ambushed and killed by the NKVD near Lviv. Rebet and Bandera were assassinated in Munich by Soviet agents in 1957 and 1959, respectively. Zarytska spent nearly 25 years in Soviet gulags, and only Hryniokh died a natural death, in Munich. These were only the most prominent Plast members who led the Ukrainian liberation struggle; there were hundreds, if not thousands, of other former scouts who fought and died for the cause. However, because stealth demanded that both OUN and UPA members use pseudonyms, many of their names may never be known.

Plast leaders were even more directly involved in supporting the formation of the Galicia Division in the German army. Aiming to buttress their war effort in the East, the Germans established this unit in Eastern Galicia in the summer of 1943. Unequivocally, the Ukrainians who volunteered for the division did not do so to support Hitler or his regime. Their hope and expectation was that after obtaining training, this unit would become the core of a regular Ukrainian army that would fight for Ukraine and against the Soviets, much like the Sich Riflemen had done during WWI.<sup>1</sup> Because the UCC and its leader, Volodymyr Kubijovyč, actively supported the recruitment drive, and since many Plast activists worked for the UCC, especially its vsUM youth department, the Plast headquarters agreed to support the creation of the *Diviziia*.

A large number of those who belonged to Plast or vsUM volunteered to serve in the *Diviziia*. In July 1943 a troop of vsUM scouts, who had just completed a scout leadership course at the Pasichna campsite, unanimously resolved to volunteer for service in the Galicia Division.

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1. In fact, the veterans' association in the diaspora bears the name Brotherhood of Former Soldiers of the First Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian National Army (est 1949).

On 17 July they marched in their scout uniforms through Lviv to military training, under the leadership of their scoutmaster Kurylovych and to the tearful farewells of their younger colleagues. Among them was the future Plast leader Yuri Ferencevych. Other Plast activists such as B. Chaikivsky, R. Rak, R. Olesnytsky, and R. Hawrylak Makarushka also joined. The *Diviziia* suffered terrible losses in the disastrous defeat at Brody in 1944. Once reconstituted, it fought in Slovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria. After surrendering to the British, its members were interned in Rimini on the Italian coast.

Another German effort to utilize Ukrainian youths did not, however, gain the support of the Plast/vSUM leadership, or of Ukrainian society. In the final phase of the war, the Germans began recruiting—or, more accurately, pressing large numbers of Ukrainian teenagers into service—in their anti-aircraft batteries, communication facilities, and first aid units. The Plast leaders decided to resist or sabotage this project surreptitiously. However, German pressure and the approaching Soviets pushed about 10,000 Ukrainian teenagers, many of whom had belonged to vSUM, into German service. Attempting to make the best of a deplorable situation, the UCC appointed Zenon Zeleny to look after the welfare of these youths. In his efforts, he was assisted by a number of Plast/vSUM activists.

Female members of Plast and vSUM were also active during the war, mostly focused on providing charity and social services for those in need.

In particular, in 1941, when the Germans captured hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners, including large numbers of Ukrainians, and imprisoned them in inhuman conditions, Plast activists such as Olha Tsipanivska attempted to aid them with food and medication whenever and however possible. The former chief physician of Plast, V. Berbenets, died of typhus while attending these prisoners. Plast activists such as Tsiopa Palijiw, Falya Liubinetska, Iryna Khoynatska, and the entire girl scout division were in the forefront of efforts to obtain food for rural children who were facing starvation, for victims of the devastating floods of 1942, and for the victims of Nazi repressions.

\* \* \*

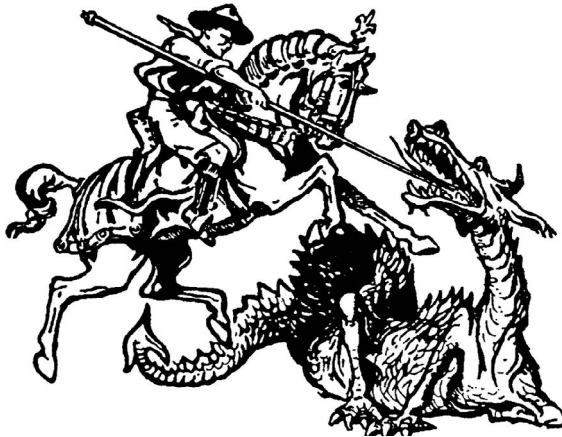
It is a wonder that the Ukrainian scouting organization Plast survived, albeit in reduced form, the ban that the Polish government had imposed on it in the 1930s. Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that members of the Clandestine Plast organization came to the forefront



during the traumatic war years, in order to lead the youth organizations permitted by the Germans in Western Ukraine. Once again, the two main aspects of scouting—character building and patriotism—came to the fore. Although Plast was not allowed to function under its own name, its practices, methods, and values were clearly evident in the Ukrainian youth organizations that were allowed to exist. This was clearly proof that Ukrainian scouting had much to offer, even in times of a most devastating conflict.

Notes:

1. Zaryts'ka [Zarytska], Ol'ha. [...], *Molode zhyttia*, 1931, p. 27
2. Kubiiovych [Kubijovyč], Volodymyr. *Ukraïntsi v General'nii Gubernii, 1939–1941* (Chicago 1975), p. 235
3. *Ibid.*, p. 238
4. *Doroha*, 1944, no. 3, p. 37
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Doroha*, 1942, p. 15



## Chapter 7

# Rebirth of Plast in the DP camps

When the Soviets occupied Western Ukraine, there could be no hope for a revival of scouting there in any form, since only Communist youth organizations were allowed to function. And when the USSR gained control over all of Eastern Europe, the small Ukrainian émigré scouting organization in Czechoslovakia also ceased to exist. Meanwhile, assimilation had progressed rapidly among the children of Ukrainian immigrants in North America and here too the few, flickering prewar centers of Ukrainian scouting disappeared. Consequently, there was only one place where Plast had any chance of re-emerging, and it was in the refugee camps of Germany and Austria. Therefore, in the years immediately after WWII, Ukrainian scouting became a completely émigré phenomenon. Its rebirth became a striking case study of the reestablishment and development of a scouting movement far from its original homeland.

\* \* \*

### The Displaced Persons (DPs)

The Second World War uprooted many millions of people from their homes. When it ended in May 1945, about 16 million forced laborers, prisoners of war, concentration camp inmates and refugees, were collected in Germany and Austria. The most numerous category of foreigners in Germany were the forced laborers from countries occupied by the Nazi forces who were brought in to buttress the severely depleted labor force. At the end of the war these forced laborers, many of whom worked in slave-like conditions, numbered a staggering 8.5 million; of that, more than 2 million came from Ukraine.

There was another category of Ukrainians who found themselves in Germany. They came for political reasons, because of their rejection of the Soviet system and fear of its advancing armies. Numbering approximately 120–150,000, most from Western Ukraine but with a significant portion having fled from Soviet Ukraine, these political refugees had experienced Soviet rule before and were now determined to avoid it at all costs.

Most refugees commenced their flight as the German armies retreated from Western Ukraine in the spring and summer of 1944. Moving ahead of the advancing Soviets, often in extremely dangerous circumstances, they arrived in Germany and Austria in the final months of the war. At this point, the main concern of the Ukrainians was to reach those parts of the crumbling Third Reich that were beyond the reach of the Soviets.

After the Nazi surrender, Germany and Austria were divided into four occupation zones. Southern Germany, including Bavaria, became the American Zone of Occupation, and it was here that most of the Ukrainian refugees congregated. As might be expected, one of the first problems that confronted the victorious Allies was what to do with the millions of foreigners in Germany. It was assumed that they would return home as soon as possible, and the majority did so. But for those from Eastern Europe and the USSR, who constituted the vast majority of the forced laborers, the decision whether to return or not was often problematic. A large number of the Ukrainian forced laborers and prisoners of war returned to Ukraine, either of their own free will or under pressure from Soviet repatriation officials. However, about 100,000 remained in Germany and they joined the Ukrainian political refugees in the American, British, and French zones.

To the consternation of the Allies, the roughly 220,000 Ukrainians who remained in Germany and Austria adamantly refused to return to their Soviet-occupied homeland. They were not alone, as about 2.2 million other Eastern Europeans also refused to return. As a result, the Allies were confronted in their zones of occupation by about 2.5 million refugees, whom they had to house and feed, and whose future was most uncertain. The Allied term for these refugees was Displaced Persons or *DPS*.

Initially, the *DPS* were under the jurisdiction of the Allied military authorities, and in October 1945 they became the responsibility of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Authority (*UNRRA*). Finally, in July 1947, the International Refugee Organization (*IRO*) was charged with the task of resettling the refugees in countries of the Western world. This process was largely completed by 1951. Thus, the *DP* era lasted from mid-1945 to late 1951. It was a unique period in the lives of the several hundred thousand Ukrainian refugees.

Facing a highly uncertain future and confronted by material hardships that were an unavoidable part of daily life in wartorn Germany, they might well have sunk to depths of depression and apathy, waiting

passively for whatever fate might bring. Indeed some did, but for many, the 4–5 years of their DP existence were marked by a remarkable outburst of activity—political, cultural, and especially organizational. Such ethnically based dynamism had not occurred in the Ukrainian diaspora, either before this relatively brief but exceedingly memorable and influential period, or since.

To a large extent, this was due to the crucial fact that for the first time the Ukrainians were not hampered by an oppressive foreign state, as was the case in interwar Poland and, much worse, the Soviet Union. UNRRA and IRO provided them with the basics, food and hardly comfortable but adequate shelter. These agencies did not interfere in their personal lives and community affairs, and consequently, the Ukrainian DPs could establish and develop their organizations as they wished (as long as they were compatible with a democratic society).

In the case of Plast, with its recent and repressed history, this was an opportunity that could not be missed. Another factor that encouraged organizational activity was the actual conditions in which the DPs lived. The Allied military authorities, and then UNRRA, created a large network of DP camps, which by 1948 numbered almost 800 spread throughout the American, British, and French zones in Germany and in Austria. The refugees were attracted to these camps because of the food, shelter (albeit greatly overcrowded), and, moreover, a degree of protection and security that was a welcome respite in the chaotic post-war environment.

The camps were self-governing and largely autonomous communities. The officially appointed Ukrainian administration was responsible for law and order in the camps, organizing schools and vocational courses, providing social services and health care, cultural activities, employment, and collecting funds for administrative costs. However, not all the DPs lived in the camps; about 25–30% found accommodations privately, among the German and Austrian population. Nonetheless, if they sought social interaction or cultural activities, they usually found it in the camps.

The Ukrainian DPs were not a homogenous group. About two-thirds came from Western Ukraine (*zakhidniaky*) while the other third came from central, or Soviet, Ukraine (*skhidniaky*). The former were usually Greco-Catholics, while the latter were Orthodox. The traditional tensions between the Greco-Catholic *zakhidniaky* and Orthodox *skhidniaky* often came to the fore. There was, as indicated in the data below, also considerable disparity in social terms:

	Germany		Austria
	American zone	British zone	
Peasants	30 %	44 %	41.5 %
Workers	34 %	35 %	22.5 %
Highly skilled and professionals	23 %	8 %	14.0 %
Others	13 %	13 %	22.0 %

A striking feature of this social composition was the very high proportion, compared to the general population of their homeland, of the well educated, especially in the American zone. There were hundreds of teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, scholars and writers, priests, bureaucrats, and businessmen, which provided the Ukrainian DPs with an unusually large reservoir of professionals who had been active in their communities at home, especially in Western Ukraine, and who were inclined to be similarly active in the camps.

Not only were the refugees disproportionately well educated, they were, in demographic terms, quite young. In 1948, about 55% were 29 years of age and younger. The age group that was most relevant to Plast, that is, 5–20 years old, constituted about 14% of the total of roughly 30,000 children and youths.

Clearly, both the social and demographic composition of the refugees favored organizational activism; other factors also encouraged it. Because employment opportunities were very scarce, many of the DPs had time on their hands and energy to spare. Moreover, they lived in close proximity to each other, both within the camps and between one camp and another, which made for ease of interaction and communication.

It is not to say that there were no problems in pursuing such activities. Living conditions were often difficult, personal and group animosities were widespread, and political, regional, and religious tensions were high. Moreover, camps were often disbanded, forcing their inhabitants to interrupt their activities and move to another camp. But in general, for those who wanted to engage in organizational activism, life in the Ukrainian DP camps provided a most encouraging and fruitful context.

## **Rebuilding Plast: The beginnings**

The rebirth of Plast in the DP camps occurred on two levels. On the one hand, the prewar leadership (Plast Center) and activists met and

established a command structure, and formulated directives that were to be used in organizing Plast units. That was, in other words, the impetus from above. On the other hand, Plast units formed spontaneously in various camps at the grassroots level, usually at the initiative of individual scout-seniors, without consultation or coordination with others. They were motivated to provide children and youth with productive and directed forms of activity beyond the schools. Indeed, one of the first challenges that those who would constitute the new Plast leadership faced was not so much encouraging the growth of Plast—this occurred spontaneously—but ensure adherence to its traditional forms and values while adapting to the new circumstances.

Since many of the Plast leaders and scout-seniors from the prewar period were patriotic community activists—exactly the type of people most at risk of suffering Soviet repressive measures, it was not surprising that a large portion of them were among the DPs. These included several members of the Clandestine Plast leadership or Plast Center, such as Severyn Levytsky, Yaro Hladkyi, Tsiopa Palijiw, Hanka Korenets, and Yuriy Starosolsky, as well as SUPE veterans from Prague such as Leonid Bachynsky and Evhen Gut-Kulchytsky.

### *Germany*

In September 1945, when the Plast Center members found themselves in the vicinity of Munich, they met in the nearby village of Egental and discussed the guidelines that should be followed in renewing Plast. At the initiative of Petro Piaseckyj, meetings of Plast Center members and other Plast activists were held on 9 and 19 September in Karlsfeld, near Munich.

It was decided there to call a conference of all known rover-rank scouts and scout-seniors. However, before these adult scouts were invited to attend the conference, a process of re-registration took place, verifying that those who could participate were beyond reproach, either in terms of Plast values or general community interests. A few were not accepted for registration and excluded from Plast membership.

Thus, the first Plast Assembly took place in Karlsfeld, on 6–7 October 1945. It was an improvised affair, with little in the way of a prepared program. The main focus was to elect a Plast leadership and to provide a sense of direction to the Plast units that were rapidly being established. Present at the assembly were 71 participants and 15 guests. Of these, 46 representatives of the American and British zones and Austria

had the right to vote. Led by Yurij Starosolsky, Evhen Gut-Kulchytsky, and N. Balytska, the assembly confirmed the need to renew Plast and to base it on its traditional organizational and ideological principles. It also decided that the organization should be called the Union of Ukrainian Émigré Scouts (*Soiuz ukraïnskykh plastuniv-emigrantiv*, or SUPE), the name used by Ukrainian scouts living abroad during the interwar period. Other matters discussed included an overview of Plast activity up to 1944, current organizational issues, the role of scout-seniors and rover-rank scouts, and directives for the activities of the junior and boy and girl scout divisions.

The highlight of the conference was the election of the new SUPE command: Atanas Figol was chosen as president, Evhen Kulchytsky was first vice-president, and Tsiopa Palijiw was second vice-president. Yaro Hladkyi was elected chief scoutmaster for boys, while the same position for girls went to Hanka Korenets. Roman Mytsyk was elected treasurer, Yaroslav Rak was elected secretary, and Yurij Starosolsky was put in charge of press and publicity. The Audit Commission (*Kontrolna komis-sia*) consisted of Mykhailo Bazhansky, Volodymyr Vretsiona, and Maria Shafranska. Because of the ad hoc, unrepresentative nature of the conference, it was decided that the Plast command should be a provisional one until a permanent body could be elected at a later date.

The American zone was clearly the focal point of Plast activity. And soon after the Karlsfeld assembly, Ukrainian scouts in the other zones also called organizational meetings. On 11 November 1945, Plast in the British zone held an assembly, led by Leonid Bachynsky and Y. Pelensky, and on 17 November, Salzburg hosted about 100 participants at the first major assembly in Austria.

Even before the Plast command and organizational structure was established, Plast groups began to appear spontaneously in many of the DP camps. Usually they were formed by adult scouts who had belonged to Plast in the interwar period or to VSUM during the war. Another category of Plast pioneers in the camps was teachers in the primary and sec-



*A. Figol, head of both the HPR and HPS, and O. Tysovsky, the founder of Plast.*

ondary schools who sought to find a way of occupying their pupils after school. Typically, well-meaning but inexperienced individuals gathered together groups of children and youth and called them Plast, but did little more than play games and engage in other trivial pursuits.

The earliest Plast units were organized by Rev. Bohdan Hanushevsky in Regensburg, Petro Piaseckyj in Karlsfeld, and Yuri Tsehelsky in Landeck. A dynamic scout-senior and priest, Hanushevsky invited parents of primary school pupils to an informational meeting about Plast. There it was decided to immediately form two packs (*hnizda*) of junior boy and girl scouts, the former called *Vovcheniata* (Wolf Cubs) with Prince Volodymyr as patron and the latter called *Lysychky* (Little Vixens) with Princess Olha as patron; Anastasia Smerechynsky became their leader. At the same time, high school students were also approached and they quickly formed four patrols of girl and boy scouts; the girls' troop chose Olha Basarab as their patron and the two patrols of boys chose Cossack Hetman Sahaidachny as their patron. Their scout leaders were also seniors: Rev. Bohdan Hanu-shevsky, Zhenia Barytska, and Illia Horodetsky.

As new refugees arrived at the camp, the Plast group, now guided by Yaro Hladkyi, quickly expanded, and the perennial problem arose: a lack of experienced leaders. Many of the older scout-seniors whom Rev. Hanushevsky approached declined to cooperate, arguing that it would be impossible to resurrect Plast under those difficult circumstances. However, younger adult scouts, especially those who had been active in the wartime VSUM, were more willing to volunteer.

### *Austria*

In the all-Ukrainian Lexenfeld camp near Salzburg, the Plast activity began under somewhat different circumstances. A high school was established in the camp, and its teachers Pavlo Babiak, Iulian Kamenetsky, and Roman Mikhniak resolved to organize a Plast unit. However, in the period immediately after the war, the American Occupation authorities forbade the formation of new youth organiza-tions. In this case, the Austrians came to the rescue. The Austrian Scout organization of Salzburg (which the Americans recognized) took the budding Ukrainian units under its patronage and granted them legal status by claiming that they were part of their own organization. It was agreed that the Austrians would not interfere in any Plast activities, and thus, Plast in Austria gained the legal right to exist.



By the fall of 1945, two troops, one of boy scouts and one of girl scouts, were organized among the pupils of the high school. Soon, pupils from the primary and trade schools were also recruited, and the Salzburg Plast branch grew rapidly, eventually reaching 350 members in number. External support for the Salzburg scouts also came from another source. An Englishwoman, Miss Hegge, who was the UNRRA social services representative at the camp, became an enthusiastic supporter of the Ukrainian scouts. She defended their interests before the occupation and UNRRA authorities, and even convinced the American army to donate uniforms to the Ukrainian scouts. Since non-military personnel were forbidden to wear khaki-colored clothes, the Plast members dyed the donated uniforms dark green. And because wide-brimmed scout hats were unavailable, they made dark brown berets a part of their uniforms. Meanwhile, Miss Hegge helped them obtain a variety of medals and emblems. As a result, the Salzburg scouts were among the best-dressed units in the DP camps.

In Ingolstadt, Bavaria, the early days of Plast were comparatively more difficult. On 10 October 1945, Vasyl Sofroniv-Levytsky, decided to form a Plast unit there (see box below).

Even though living conditions were often difficult, the fact that many of the DP camps in the American zone were located in or near the Alps also encouraged the rebirth of scouting. The early days of Plast in Mittenwald, located in the midst of the Alps, were memorable (see box below).

With the widespread growth of Plast units, the SUPE leadership sought to guide this activity along traditional scouting lines. For this purpose, it issued, in the latter part of 1945 and early 1946, a series of

### **Plast in Ingolstadt, Bavaria**

A few days ago, I decided to turn my idea into reality and create a Plast unit in our camp. The children in our camp live with practically no supervision. They do not want to stay at home, simply because no one has a real home. They spend two hours in school, and the rest of the time is spent outside. They run to the Americans in the hospital, who toss them pieces of chocolate from the window, and when the children rush to get the chocolate, they pour water on them...Plast should take care of the children after school hours. Unfortunately, after the first little hike, the next two days were a failure. One day, the supervisors did not show up, and the next day the children did not bother to come. But still I believe the project will work.<sup>1</sup>

### Plast in Mittenwald

The scouts who arrived in the spring of 1946 to the DP camp in Mittenwald found themselves in beautiful natural surroundings. In the attic of one of the buildings we were assigned a meeting place. Tree stumps served as chairs, and other furniture and decorations were also homemade....In conducting our Plast activities we were constantly improvising. It was difficult to obtain complete uniforms, we had no manuals and no camping equipment. We were constantly sewing, re-sewing, and re-coloring...but the lack of hiking boots, rain gear, tents, and cooking pots, or of anything to cook in these pots, could not diminish our youthful enthusiasm. The branch leaders and our scout leaders were Petro Vepryk, Oleksander Berezhnytsky, Petro Piaseckyj, Nina Piaseckyj, and Rev. Hanushevsky. After the horrors of the war, the difficult conditions, the worries of our parents about the future, scouting gave us a chance to be like other young people. We laughed, joked, sang, expended our youthful energy in hikes, sports and skiing. We were pleased that we could overcome difficulty and attain success. It also developed among us a sense of idealism, the ability to work together, and love for Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

49 instruction sheets (*obizhnyky*) dealing with various aspects of scouting. The earliest of these instructions announced the renewal of Plast, described the procedure for forming new units in the camps and proper organizational structure, and provided instructions concerning activities boy and girl and junior scout divisions should engage in. Other instructions emphasized that Plast members were forbidden to allow partisan or political influence. They also announced the formation of a Plast cooperative, the issuance of Plast publications, and preparations for jamborees and rallies.

In terms of organization, Germany and Austria were divided into four regions that corresponded to the three Allied zones of occupation in Germany plus the one in Austria. These were subdivided into provinces (*oblasti*) and encampments (*koshi*); the term *stanytsia* was introduced later. It was also decided that the traditional age-based structure of Plast members into divisions (*ulady*) would be maintained, namely, junior scouts, boy and girl scouts, rover-rank scouts, and scout-seniors—although this issue sparked considerable discussion, especially concerning the scout-seniors.

Number of Plast branches in Germany and Austria			
	1946	1947	1948
American zone	30	25	24
British zone	7	12	9
French zone	–	2	6
Austria	6	5	7

Although each zone was largely autonomous and self-contained, an overarching organizational network was established and maintained for Plast; in 1947, the structure in Germany and Austria was as follows:

American zone	led by the main Plast command	
	Aschaffenburg oblast	led by M. Bazhansky
	Munich oblast	led by Volodymyr Protsiuk
	Regensburg oblast	led by Myron Utrysko
British zone	led by Volodymyr Shekhovych	
	consisted of two city branches, Heidenau and Hanover, and several smaller branches	
French zone	led by Roman Marynovych	
	consisted of several small branches in Freiburg, Wangen, and Gneisenau	
Austria	led by Iulian Kamenetsky	

## Stabilization

The Second Assembly, which took place approximately six months after the First Assembly in Karlsfeld, was now formally called a conference (*z'izd*). It met again in Karlsfeld and its goal was to evaluate the first half-year of activity, identify problems, and better define the direction in which the already existing Plast units in Germany and Austria should orient themselves. The Plast Command reported on what it had attempted to achieve: it had tried to bring some sense of order, organization and coordination to the rapidly appearing units, it established a territorially based organizational framework, it began training new cadres of scout leaders, it sought to popularize scouting, especially by means of a publication program, and it began to establish contacts with international scouting. Various reports, especially those by chief scoutmaster

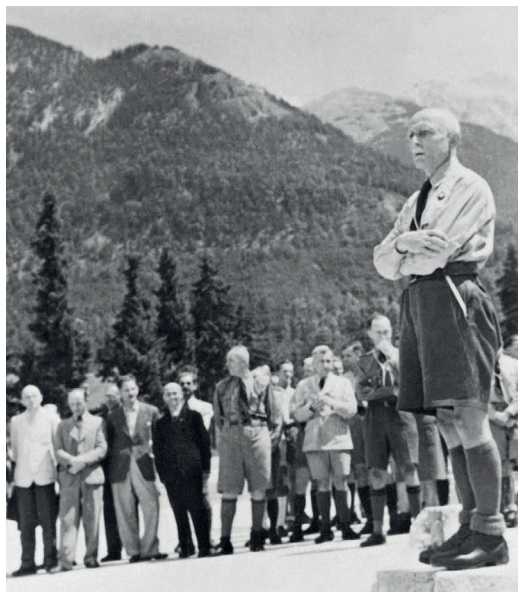
Yaro Hladkyi, provided a clear picture of the organization's development.

It was decided that directives for the Plast divisions should be prepared as soon as possible, with UPS a priority. Levytsky led a lengthy discussion on what the role of adult scouts should be and how Plast values should relate to the adult divisions. While no definite conclusions were reached, it was decided that the age at which rover-rank scouts become scout-seniors should be raised from 25 (optional) to 30 (mandatory).

The highlight of the Second Assembly was the report by the Plast camp director, Atanas Figol, who noted that Plast was re-emerging in a most unusual environment—after the clash of two totalitarian systems, in the midst of Soviet-Allied tensions, in the context of the DP camps, and, most importantly, in exile. Moreover, it was a time of ideological disorientation that confused and demoralized large segments of youth.

Fortunately for Plast, its ideals and values had stood the test of time, and were well positioned to serve as guidelines for the future. Clearly, Plast was presently going through typical “growing pains.” Many of its activities, while reflecting dynamic and multi-faceted growth, were geared for external effect, to impress both observers and participants. In the future, Plast would have to focus on programs that had a positive effect on character building. In terms of the Ukrainian community, Plast would continue to emphasize patriotism and support of Ukrainian national identity. It would especially strive to strengthen its cooperation with schools, which was viewed as a mutually beneficial relationship with great potential.

By stressing the development of proper values, Figol noted, Plast complemented the mission of the schools. They, in turn, could help Plast by encouraging teachers to serve as sponsors of Plast units, allowing scouts



*Severyn Levytsky, Chief Scout for Plast, in Mittenwald, 1947.*

### **Disproportionate divisions**

Within a six-month period, Plast established over 100 units in the American zone alone, with a total membership of 2,500. The junior scout and girl and boy scout divisions showed rapid and balanced growth, but there were practically no rover-rank scouts and a large number of scout-seniors. The latter reflected the generation that had been active in Ukrainian scouting during the dynamic 1920s as well as the 1930s and wartime, but those years of repression had also discouraged the rise of a generation that would now have been populating the rover-rank scout division.<sup>3</sup>

to have their meetings in the schools and to use their libraries and sports facilities. While emphasizing that much remained to be done, he noted that the achievement of the rebuilding period were considerable. He especially prized the fact that Plast had avoided being dragged into partisan and political conflicts, which were rampant in the camps, once again demonstrating that it was and intended to remain a strictly apolitical organization. Another achievement was that Plast had shown that it was a truly national organization by expanding beyond its traditional Western Ukrainian base and attracting many Central and Eastern Ukrainian youths.

Finally, he addressed a criticism that was sometimes directed at Plast, namely, that it was elitist. Figol stressed that Plast was open to the children and youth of all classes, all religions, and all regions of Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> The only selectivity that Plast practiced, Figol argued, was that it accepted those who lived according to its rules and values, and rejected those who could or would not do so. The reports on the activity of the temporary Plast command were well received by the conference. As a result, the delegates unanimously adopted a motion to re-elect the entire Plast Command as the formally recognized leadership of the Ukrainian scouting movement, which was based in Munich.

On 15–17 March 1947 a third general Plast Assembly was held. This important gathering in Mittenwald was attended by 162 scout-seniors and rover-rank scouts, of whom 146 had the right to vote. Based on the experience of the previous eighteen months, the conference introduced a series of important changes into the organization. Several months before, a draft charter prepared by Yaroslav Rak had been distributed among Plast activists. The main goal of the conference was to discuss and adopt this new charter, which was needed in

order to define Plast as an entity that had legal status in the Allied zones of occupation and abroad. The charter proposed that the name of the organization be changed from SUPE to *Soiuz ukraïnskykh plastuniv* (Association of Ukrainian Scouts).

The reasoning behind this was that the word “émigré” in SUPE implied a loosening of the relationship with the homeland, and this had to be avoided by all means possible. In English, the organization’s new name was to be rendered as “Ukrainian Scout Association,” while in German it was to be “Ukrainischer Pfadfinderbund.” Another terminological change was that the Plast command was now referred to as a *starshyna*. A series of organizational changes was also introduced and accepted. For one thing, Plast became clearly divided into male and female divisions, each with their own scoutmasters and executive (*bulava*). The argument for this innovation was that it reflected the different approaches that were needed in leading boys and girls; it was also an attempt to align Plast more closely to other scouting organizations which maintained a strict division between male and female scouts.

Another change to the organizational structure was the delineation between the administrative and training/pedagogical (*vykhovni*) functions of the leadership. The administrators should focus on administrative, publishing, financial, and economic tasks, membership and communication activities, and contacts with international scouting. Meanwhile, the scout leaders (*vykhovnyky*) for the boy and girl and junior scout divisions should concentrate exclusively on their work with youth. Finally, there was a restructuring of the Plast leadership, into the Supreme Plast Council (*Holovna Plastova Rada*, or HPR), an elected body of 18 adult scouts that had an overseeing and consultative function, and the Supreme Plast Executive (*Holovna Plastova Starshyna*, or HPS), a body of 10 that was appointed by the HPR to direct the activities of the organization.

The HPS executive in the postwar DP camps had a dual function: it was responsible for all Plast activity in the largest, i.e., American zone, and it also functioned as the highest authority for all Plast units worldwide. Atanas Figol was chosen to head both the HPR and HPS. Two honorary positions were also created: Oleksander Tysovsky was acknowledged as the founder of Plast, and Severyn Levytsky received the title of Chief Scout (*Nachalny Plastun*).

Clearly, in organizational terms the Third Assembly was a watershed event in the rebirth of Plast, introducing a series of changes that would define the structure of the organization for many years to come.



*1947 Plast Spring Fest in Mittenwald, where more than 2,000 Ukrainian scouts gathered for the first time after WWII.*

The conference called upon all Plast youth to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Plast. On 4 August 1947, Plast held a three-day celebration called a Spring Fest, with not only Plast members but also many non-Ukrainian guests attending. Plast celebrated its anniversary and simultaneously demonstrated its viability as an independent organization, which was based on the deep patriotism of Ukrainian émigrés and a romanticized adventurism that formed the basis for mentoring youth at the time. This particular Spring Fest soon became legendary, as Plast members recounted their experiences there with enthusiasm from generation to generation.<sup>5</sup>

### *First Plast Congress*



The three Plast assemblies had focused primarily on organizational issues. Consequently, many members, especially the scout-seniors, believed that their next general meeting should be a congress, since it was to concentrate on the theoretical and ideological principles that were to guide Plast. The First Plast Congress was held on 26–29 March 1948 in Aschaffenburg, at a time when it was becoming clear that the DP era was drawing to a close. The goal of the congress was thus to summarize what had been achieved in the past three and one-half years, to discuss and clarify the ideas on which Plast was based, and to prepare for a new era. Over 281 active Plast members attended.

The symbolic theme of the gathering was the “Great Trek,” one that would lead Plast both to new lands and, eventually, back to the homeland. At the outset, a long list of greetings from a great variety of leading Ukrainian institutions and individuals was read, an indication of the respect Plast had earned within the Ukrainian émigré community. The discussions that followed dealt with themes raised by Plast’s leading theoreticians: Volodymyr Yaniv stressed that the essence of Plast had to be idealism; Evhen Gut-Kulchytsky discussed how Plast should relate to the family, school, church, and community; Yuriy Starosolsky spoke about “spiritual armor and tools,” based on the Plast Oath and code, that a scout would need on the Great Trek; Yaro Hladkyi analyzed how individualism, elitism, leadership, centralization, and decentralization related to Plast activity; Atanas Milianych focused on the need to be practical and to learn how to provide Plast with a material base; and Yaroslav Rak pointed to the great challenges that would confront Plast in the new lands, stressing especially the threat of denationalization. Although the questions raised at the Congress were weighty and complex, and differences of opinion were many, the atmosphere of the gathering was relaxed and comradely—reminiscent, as one participant remarked, of discussions around a campfire.

At the Congress, the НПС also reported on preparations for the imminent dispersal from the DP camps. There would be no group emigration of Plast members; each would go where it was most practicable for them personally. Plast appointed leaders-designate for the new countries, emphasizing that there should be no rush to establish local Plast organizations.



*First Plast Congress was held in Aschaffenburg, 1948.*



In late 1948 and early 1949, preparations for emigration began to build and “emigration fever” began to spread. Thus, the HPS executive decided to gather the fourth and, as many realized, last assembly in Germany. It was held on 15–18 April 1949 in Zuffenhausen, near Stuttgart. Attending were scout-seniors as well as 64 rover-rank scouts who had the right to vote, and 10 guests. Plast activists were clearly aware that one era was coming to an end and a new one was about to begin. Figol, who had written extensively on ideological issues, declared that what had been achieved during the DP era would be the inheritance of future generations of Ukrainian scouts. However, the main theme of the assembly was how to continue with preparations for the massive emigration that was already underway. The HPS informed the assembly that in the new lands, the usual rules regarding a Plast branch would not have to be applied, that is, separate male and female units would not have to be formed at the outset and scouts would not have to be separated into age-based divisions. Newly formed units would be called Plast Groups. For each country to which sizable numbers of Ukrainian emigrated, the HPS would appoint its official representative, who would temporarily function as the highest Plast authority in the land. All agreed that the main goal of the transitional period was to maintain the unity of Plast, despite the dispersal of its members to many countries.

The HPS indicated that although the Plast membership in Germany and Austria was rapidly diminishing, the basic structure there was still intact, and for the time being, the Plast leadership would still be based in Germany. However, it was agreed that the HPR should be expanded to 35 members in order to properly deal with the geographic dispersal of the organization. Under Figol’s leadership, it would have complete authority to make crucial decisions until the next congress, to be held three years hence.

## **Age-based Plast divisions in the DP camps**

### *Junior scout division (UPN)*

In the DP camps, the earliest and most rapid growth occurred among the youngest members of Plast, probably because the junior and boy and girl scout divisions had the most pressing need for supervised activities outside the home and school. Most of the scout leaders were involved in working with the UPN, and it was here that community support was the strongest. Usually, the primary schools in the DP camps served as

### Junior scout leader training by the ROK

The first course given by the ROK was in Ingolstadt on 9–14 February 1946. During 3–4 days, which included 28–38 hours of instruction, the trainees were introduced to the history, organization, and methodology of junior scout leadership. Much of this included practical work with the children. When the eighth course was held on 22–28 August 1948 in Augsburg, a new, improved, and expanded training curriculum was introduced, consisting of 65 hours of instruction and focusing more on competitive elements. The number of participants in the courses ranged from 17 to 68. By the time the fifteenth (and last) course was given, which coincided with the Fourth ROK, held from 3 May to 8 June 1949, over 300 junior scout leaders had completed training, with about 85–100 continuing active work in the UPN each year. Besides Teodosii Samotulka, other organizers of these courses were Tonia Horochowych, N. Bilozir, B. Rubinovych, and Mykola Switucha.

the recruiting ground from which the junior boy and girl scouts dens and packs were formed, and often teachers became their leaders or patrons. Moreover, the UPN division had an exceedingly committed and experienced leader in the person of Teodosii Samotulka (pseud. *Staryi Orel*, or Old Eagle). Others who were very active with the junior scouts were M. Stetsiuk, Mykhailo Ivanenko, Tonia Horochowych, and O. Zharsky.

As early as 21 September 1945, the directives were set for forming junior girl and boy scout dens and packs. By February 1946, a sub-commission for the UPN, led by Samotulka, was established in SUPE, and in April of that year it issued a new set of directives that, among other matters, called for a new age grouping for this division.

One of the reasons for the rapid and successful development of the junior scouts was that from the outset great emphasis was placed on the proper training of their scout leaders. Based on the methods he developed in the vsUM leader training camp in Kosiv, in January 1944 Samotulka created a program development board called the *Rada Orlynoho Kruha* (Council of the Eagles' Circle). In training literature he stressed the need to instill in children the principles embodied in the Plast slogan—strength/resilience, beauty/integrity, caution/consideration, and swiftness/alertness. The junior boy and girl scout leaders had their own publication, *Vohon Orlynoi Rady* (Fire of the Eagles' Council), starting in March 1948. Also, for a brief time, the junior boy and girl



*DP scouts of the junior division.*

scouts had their own magazine, called *Novak*; it was later followed by *Mali druzi* (Little Friends).

In 1947 the Plast junior scout division reached its highest membership levels in Germany and Austria: there were 1,852 boys and girls, and about 150–60 male and female scout leaders, about a third of whom had themselves come up through the scout ranks. In 1945–49, the UPN alone held 22 camps, each with 30–80 participants. Among the most active organizers of these camps were the scout-seniors L. Bachynsky, T. Samotulka, I. Siiak, A. Smerechynsky, N. Piaseckyj, V. Darmokhval, N. Hirniak, and P. Saievych. In June 1946, a jamboree for the junior scouts was held in Neu Ulm. However, camping among the youngest members of Plast was not as widespread as it might have been, as the lack of experienced leaders, and epidemics of childhood diseases, curtailed many plans. Despite the difficulties, the strong growth and widespread activity of the junior Plast division in the DP camps created a solid membership base for the years to come, which would prove to be especially important for the future of Plast.

### *Boy and girl scout division (UPU)*

This older age-group division developed somewhat later than the junior scouts, with SUPÉ establishing the UPU in January 1946. Its growth was less rapid than that of the UPN, to a large extent because scout leaders for the youth would normally have to come from the rover-rank scouts, who were relatively more scarce at that time and place. Most of the girl and boy scouts were recruited within the framework of the secondary schools. The classmates usually lived very close to each other, and the frequently breathtaking natural surroundings encouraged hiking and camping, which was a major attraction for this age group. Youths aged 13–18 were eligible to join, but they had to write a formal application that noted their “productive” or “useful” activities, including school performance, self-education, and group activities. Letters of recommendation from Plast members in good standing were expected. Candidates also had to pass a “test of swiftness/alertness,” which evaluated their ability to react well in unexpected situations.

By and large, the Plast programs and methods that had been developed in the 1920s were applied, with little change, in the UPU division. However, the boy and girl scout patrols and troops were not numbered, as was the case in the 1920s, to avoid any hint of militarization, which was discouraged by the Allied occupation authorities and UNRRA. The merit

badge system also changed somewhat; it now included 24 well-defined skills that the scouts had to master. This system also placed a greater emphasis on knowledge about Ukraine, as well as skills that went under the heading “preparation for practical life and work.”



*Scouts parading in DP camp.*

Faced with the problem of finding and training scout leaders, in December 1945 and again in March and April of 1946, SUPE organized courses in Karlsfeld for troop scoutmasters (*zviazkovi*) and patrol scout leaders (*hurlkovi*), and published a series of manuals on the methodology of leadership.

Leadership training for adult scout leaders also occurred at specialized training camps; by 1948, about 200 male leaders were trained in this way. By 1947, a 40–60-hour training program was developed that included the study of the history, ideology, and structure of Plast, Ukrainian studies, health care, physical education, drills, practical economic and financial activity, familiarity with Plast publications, singing, and contacts with international scouting.

At the UPU division’s high point in 1947, there were over 970 boys and 870 girls in this scout category of Plast. The attractive natural environment promoted camping as an especially popular activity.

### *Rover-rank scout division (USP)*

Development of the USP proved to be most difficult in the 1945–50 period. Normally, as was the case in the 1920s, the division should have been composed of experienced scouts who could lead individual scout units, as well as the organization as a whole. However, the ban on Plast in the 1930s, and the war, prevented the development of such a cohort. Instead, most of those who wished to enter the rover-rank scouts were almost completely inexperienced and unfamiliar with scouting. Therefore, the evolution of the USP was slow and problematic at this juncture.

Their first assembly took place on 1 July 1946 in Mittenwald, and focused on refining the division’s regulations. At the outset, requirements

for admittance were rather loose, with emphasis placed on attracting as many members as possible. The age of entry was 18, and in 1946, the majority of the 425 early members were about to finish secondary school or were university students. And there was a large contingent, especially among the girls, of working-class or peasant background.

Rover-rank scouts in Plast were expected to work to improve their character, help Plast to grow, and take an active and constructive role in their communities. But it soon became apparent that many new members had difficulty relating to the Plast ethos. They found the strict rules against drinking and smoking onerous, and they could not or would not get involved in leading the younger scouts. Others, especially those attracted to extreme nationalism, found Plast strictures against political involvement to be unpatriotic. Some of working-class or peasant background resented what they perceived as elitist tendencies in Plast. A large number who joined had not delved into the scouting ideology, and simply followed the fad or were attracted by the uniforms and parades.

In any case, within the first year there was a sharp decline in membership; from 246 female rover-rank scouts in the German zones and Austria, a year later there were only 141. Meanwhile, the male units managed only a slight increase, from 169 in 1946 to 181 in 1947. Thus, in the early years of the DP era, the USP was unable to play a leading role in Plast as it had done in the 1920s. By 1948–49, the



*Girl scouts camping.*



*Scouts relaxing with music.*

situation began to improve somewhat, as those who stayed in Plast were both more committed and experienced.

The structure of the USP division also became more defined and varied, with new rules of procedure adopted at their second assembly, on 14–15 February 1948 in Munich. New members were expected to have come up through the junior and boy and girl scout ranks, needed letters of recommendation from three scout-seniors, and were expected to take the Plast Oath. Rover-rank scouts in Plast were obliged to continue to improve their scouting skills. A rise in activity was reflected in the numerous regional USP assemblies, but perhaps most important was the appearance of mother troops (*materni kurini*), in which like-minded older scouts could congregate.

The *Lisovi Chorty* fraternity (whose traditions went back to Lviv, 1922) began to reconstitute itself in Munich in December 1945. Other traditionally strong troops, such as *Chervona Kalyna* (Stryi, 1926), *Chornomortsi* (Lviv, 1927), and the female *Ti, shcho hreblirvut* (Lviv, 1927), were also reinvigorated. By 1948, the USP numbered 415 overall, 267 males and 148 females. New and large troops were founded in the 1945–47 period, including, for example, the sororities *Pershi Stezhi* in Munich, *Lisovi Mavky* in Erlangen, and *Buryverkhy* in Mittenwald, as well as the *Burlaky*, *Khmelnychenky*, *Orden Khrestonostsiv*, and *Chota Krylatykh* fraternities. As the number of rover-rank scouts grew, a separate division was created for them in Mittenwald on 2 July 1946; it was initially led by Stefa Yavorska and later by Teresa Sharko.

The USP fraternities and sororities specialized in different areas of scouting. The *Burlaky* focused on skiing and mountain climbing (two of their members, Bohdan "Jack" Jaciw and Ihor Suchowersky,

scaled Mont Blanc), the *Chornomortsi* focused, as might be expected, on sea scouting, the *Sromantsi* worked on Plast publications, and the *Khmelnychenky* cultivated Cossack traditions. Consequently, those who joined rover-rank scouts after graduating from the boy and girl scout divisions had ever more opportunities to find a group that specialized in their area of interest. The combination of shared experiences and common interests tended, with the passage of time, to transform these groups into tightly-knit bands of lifelong friends who were committed to Plast.

### *Scout-seniors division (UPS)*

The creation in Plast of a scout-seniors division, for members over 30 years of age, was among the earliest in international scouting. The UPS was established in April 1930 in Lviv, about 17 years sooner than a similar category appeared in English scouting. However, Plast was banned mere months after the UPS was founded, and as result, the scout-seniors did not really have an opportunity to develop. But it was these members, who remembered and experienced the Plast of 1920s, that played the most prominent role in its postwar renewal in Germany and Austria. Consequently, the place and function of scout-seniors in Plast, and in the community as a whole, became a topic of heated discussion and debate.

On 6 February 1946, SUPE created a division for both scout-seniors and rover-rank scouts, but by April a separate division for scout-seniors was created, headed by Omelan Tarnavskyj. The initial objectives of the UPS division in Plast were to establish who were to be its members, and to issue directives. Membership was a complicated issue. In general, to be registered as a scout-senior required membership in Plast in the prewar period. A special effort was made to ensure that no one who had discredited themselves, either in relationship to Plast or the Ukrainian community as a whole, would be enrolled. Individuals who had not been in Plast but now wished become active in it were also considered for membership; a Verification Commission, consisting of long-time activists such as Severyn Levytsky, Hanka Korenets, and Evhen Gut-Kulchytsky was formed to examine every application. By the end of 1946, of 486 applications, 260 were verified or accepted. Of these, 101 scout-seniors were granted the rank of “scoutmaster,” signifying that they were experienced scouts who were suited for leadership positions.





*Scout-seniors camping in Aschaffenburg.*

Regulations, composed by Levytsky, were discussed by the UPS in Berchtesgaden on 27 July 1946 and formally accepted by SUPE four months later. Levytsky also spurred the revival of a co-ed fraternity named after Tysovsky, originally organized in 1930 exclusively for scout-seniors.\* A similar fraternity, the *Kharakternyky*, led by Myron Utrysko, was founded in Regensburg. Other scout-senior groups included the *Lisovi Chorty*, *Chervona Kalyna*, *Chornomortsi* and *Ti, shcho hrebli rvut*. In all, 13 USP fraternities and sororities also had UPS members.

The fact that many scout-seniors living in or near the postwar DP camps did not have regular employment allowed them to be more active in scouting than would normally be the case. Above all, they were prominent in leadership positions, both on the SUPE executive and locally. Many also served as scout leaders, and a two-day training course was organized especially for scout-seniors on 12–14 July 1946 near Neumarkt; 30 members participated, led by Utrysko, most of them from the *Kharakternyky*.

An innovation of the period was the organization of several camps exclusively for the UPS. In the summers of 1946 and 1947 this division organized multi-day hikes in the Alps. The *Kharakternyky* published, albeit briefly, a bulletin called *Seniorska dumka* (Scout-Senior Thoughts). An unusual phenomenon was organizing hearings within the UPS where conflicts between members or accusations of improper behavior could be addressed.

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\* Most Plast adult scout fraternities and sororities catered to both USP and UPS.

Generally, it was agreed that the scout-seniors should strive to always maintain a scouting way of life. A frequently repeated view was that Plast seniors should encourage the spread of scouting values at all levels of community life, and especially among the bitterly feuding Bandera and Melnyk factions of the OUN. In short, UPS members should use their Plast background to become model citizens and improve the social, political, cultural, and economic conditions of the Ukrainian diaspora. To a large extent, these views were little more than wishful thinking, for there was never developed a mechanism or concrete method of implementing these ideas. Nonetheless, they did encourage and reflect a strong *esprit de corps* in the UPS, which, together with their large numbers, made them an especially important and dynamic element in the rebirth of Plast.

## Other Plast activities

### *Publications*

In every scouting movement, publications that propagate scouting ideals, methods, and activities are crucial for providing the movement with a sense of unity and direction, and they are a primary means of attracting new members. When Plast began to rebuild in 1945, one of the greatest problems it faced was a lack of any publications that reflected and encouraged its activity. Therefore, the development of a publication program became one of its priorities in the immediate postwar period. But there were considerable obstacles, most notably a shortage of both funds and paper, as well as authorities' stringent rules regarding publications. Nonetheless, in November 1945 the Plast group in Karlsfeld managed to put out a modest hectographed broadsheet. A major breakthrough came in January 1946, when SUPE authorized a monthly publication, bearing the same name as the leading Plast publication from the 1920s, *Molode zhyttia* (Young Life).

For one year, this informative publication, based in Munich, appeared relatively regularly, almost exclusively thanks to the efforts of Evhen Kulchytsky. To deal with the financial and technical aspects of its production and distribution, SUPE authorized the creation of a publication department in the recently organized Plast Cooperative. In 1947, under the editorship of the highly regarded longtime Plast activist and poet Bohdan Krawciw, *Molode zhyttia*, now based in Augsburg, was replaced by a well-designed, monthly printed publication, replete with

photographs and focusing on the boy and girl scout division. It contained articles on practical scouting, discussions of pressing issues facing Plast, reports about international scouting, and a review of Plast activities in the various zones of occupation.

By 1948, the popular publication again reverted to the name *Molode zhyttia*. In 1946, M. Hryhoriev, a Plast activist in Prague during the 1930s, published in Augsburg several attractive issues of *Plastun-Scout*. In addition to *Mali druzi*, produced for the junior boy and girl scouts, a series of pamphlets containing in-depth discussions of key issues confronting Plast appeared under the heading *Zapysky ukrainskoho plastuna* (Notes of a Ukrainian Scout).

Local branches and individual units also put out their own publications, although most were amateurish in appearance and brief in duration. It is worth mentioning one in particular, *Yunatskyi zryv* (Youthful Impulse), a scouting-oriented broadsheet published in Italy in the POW camp in Rimini, where former members of the Galicia Division were interned.

In 1948, at the initiative of Atanas Figol, the publication section of the Plast Cooperative was transformed into an independent, Plast-owned publishing house called *Molode Zhyttia*, which was based in Munich. By this time, the list of Plast publications had grown considerably. It included 49 sets of policy guidelines, regulations issued by SUPЕ, and a series of pamphlets dealing with such aspects of scouting as merit badges, first aid, uniforms, drills, field exercises, and programs for the



*V dorohu!* A Plast Songbook; a Ukrainian edition of Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*; and Starosolsky's treatise *Velyka hra* (*The Great Game*), publications of Plast's *Molode Zhyttia* Publishers.

UPN junior boy and girl scout division. Molode Zhyttia added to this collection of literature by publishing the seminal work of Plast's founder, *Zhyttia v Plasti* (Life in Scouting), and some of Baden-Powell's writing. *Velyka hra* (Great Game), the highly popular scouting philosophy by Yuriy Starosolsky, was published in 1948, followed a year later by Leonid Bachynsky's *Pershi kroky* (First Steps), catering to the junior scouts. In addition, the publishing house produced all the forms used by Plast, as well as greeting cards and stamps.

To increase its income, Molode Zhyttia began to publish non-Plast materials, notably *Zhyttia* ("the Journal of the Ukrainian Family Abroad"), and it soon became a leading Ukrainian-language publisher. Once large-scale emigration began in 1948–49, the Plast publishing venture began to falter, and its further fate was dependent on how soon and how well the Ukrainian scouting movement reestablished itself in the widely dispersed diaspora.

### *The Plast Cooperative*

Scouting has always emphasized the need for scouts to be self-reliant, including in the economic sense. In the DP camps, the scout-seniors who spearheaded the Plast rebirth realized that in economic terms, they could rely only on their own very limited economic resources. Consequently, on 3 November 1946 the SUPE leadership, harkening back to precedents from the 1920s period, sanctioned the establishment of a Plast cooperative.

Spearheading this initiative was Mykola Darmochwal, who organized the first Plast cooperative for the DPs, in Bayreuth. Others were established in Regensburg, Augsburg, and Neumarkt. In order to raise capital, the cooperatives sold shares at a very low price. In theoretical terms, the goal of the cooperative was to coach scouts on finding ways to support themselves. On a more concrete level, the cooperative sought to produce or acquire uniforms, camping, and sports equipment, and then to sell it by means of small retail outlets in a number of the larger DP camps. An additional advantage of the undertaking was that it could provide employment for Plast members. While the profits generated by the Plast cooperative were modest, they were enough to finance the activities of the HPS and the Molode Zhyttia publishing house. To oversee Plast finances, the HPS established a financial division called the *Plastova Hospodarska Kvartyra* (Plast Economic Department) and the Plast Treasury, both of which prepared detailed annual reports.

### *Parent auxiliaries*

In December 1946, again following precedents that had been set in the 1920s, the Plast executive issued directives for the formation of Plast support societies among the parents of Plast members and other interested individuals. *Plast-pryiat* auxiliaries were set up in Regensburg, Augsburg, Salzburg, and several other branches. However, the initiative did not develop successfully, and support from such groups was sporadic at best. A possible factor may have been the intense political conflicts among the adults, which could not be overcome for their children's sake.

### *The Philatelic Bureau*

There is a longstanding tradition in scouting to produce stamps in commemoration of special occasions such as jamborees. When the Plast assembly was held in July 1947, a number of enthusiasts produced a series of Plast stamps that could be placed alongside regular stamps to mark the occasion. Their popularity was such that it was decided to form a Plast Philatelic Bureau that would issue Plast stamps at suitable events. However, enthusiasm for the project soon declined, and only a few retained an interest in it.

## **International contacts**

During the DP period, a major change occurred in Plast's contacts with international scouting; the isolation of the previous decades was largely gone. Although the World Scouting Bureau in London remained committed to the principle that only scouting organizations based in their own sovereign states could be recognized by the World Scouting Bureau, the plight of the DPs forced it to make some concessions. In fact, besides the Ukrainians, scouting organization emerged in the camps also among the Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Belarusians, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, and Yugoslavs; and their condition of statelessness was similar to that of the Ukrainians. Given the fact that there were between 11,000 (according to the London Bureau) and 25,000 (according to their own statistics) DP scouts, this was an issue the WSB could no longer ignore.

The issue came to a head in 1947, in connection with the International Scouting Jamboree in Moisson, France. When the various DP

scouts requested permission to participate, the London Bureau rejected the request on the grounds of statelessness. However, this placed the London Bureau in the uncomfortable position of ignoring or excluding a large number of scouts from the international scouting community. As a result, a small group of DP scouts, including two patrols of Ukrainians, led by Yaro Hladkyi and Leonid Bachynsky, were granted unofficial status at the jamboree.

An even more momentous concession came immediately after the jamboree, at the International Scouting Conference held 19–22 August 1947 in France. Article 14 of its resolutions stipulated that a Special Division for DP scouts was to be created, in



order to represent their interests with UNRRA and the occupation authorities in Germany and Austria. As a result, the DP scouts, including Plast, became—for as long as they remained DPs—a part of the international scouting movement. Their status, however, came with limitations, including the withholding of voting rights at the International Scouting Conference. Nonetheless, for the first time since its founding in Polish-ruled Galicia over three decades previously, Plast gained some semblance of recognition and status in international scouting.

Even before links were established with the London Bureau, Plast had expanded its international contacts in the DP camps by cooperating, at times quite closely, with the other scouting organizations, especially the Balts. In August 1945, the DP scouts established an International Scouting Council in Mittenwald; Plast was represented initially by Rev. Hanushevsky and later by Mykhailo Ivanenko. This council held an international DP scout jamboree, organized by Plast, in Augsburg on 6–19 May 1946. It attracted over 1,500 participants from among the Ukrainian, Polish, Belarusian, Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian scouts.

The DP scouts of various nationalities also frequently participated in joint activities and events; they often visited each others' camps. Contacts were also established with German and, especially, Austrian scouts. On several occasions, Plast members attended jamborees of the Swiss and Italian scouts, as well as of British and French scouts, in their zones. Another means of pursuing international contacts was to correspond with fellow scouts in the camps and abroad. In short, never before had Plast had such a broad range of international contacts.

### **World Scouting Bureau establishes DP Division**

In the fall of 1947, the WSB established a DP Scouting Division office in Munich, and a Commissioner, Mon. Monnet, was appointed to represent the DP scouts before IRO, the Occupation authorities, and the headquarters in London. The Commissioner was also expected to support and coordinate the activities of the organizations in his charge. At the outset, Monnet visited almost all the major scouting centers in the DP camps, and sought to reorganize them into integrated multinational units, an approach which was in line with the London Bureau's bias against ethnically based organizations. But resistance from Plast, represented at the DP Division by Yaro Hladkyi, and the other national organizations led him to abandon this plan. Instead he concentrated on mobilizing resources—especially scouting literature, transportation, and supplies from IRO to support camping—organizing courses for scout leaders, and seeing to it that the various national organizations adhered to scouting principles. In the course of 30 months, the DP Division sponsored, supplied, and helped to organize 195 scout camps, in which 15,600 scouts participated. Monnet also completed a report dealing with the scouting movement in the camps. In 1950, when most DP scouts emigrated to new homes, the DP Division was dismantled, and Plast's links with the London Bureau were reduced to a minimum.



*A British scout leader standing among Plast scouts.*

## Relations with the Ukrainian Youth Association (*Spilka ukraïnskoï molodi*, or SUM)

From the outset, the Plast leadership was well aware of the fact that its demanding program would not be able to attract the majority of Ukrainian youth. Consequently, it accepted the appearance of other Ukrainian youth organizations as not only a natural but even a welcome development, from an overall patriotic point of view. In December 1946, a new organization, the Ukrainian Youth Association (*Spilka ukraïnskoï molodi*, or SUM) was established in the DP camps. Its goals appeared to be quite different from those of Plast. Functioning under the aegis of the Bandera faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, SUM espoused the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism and saw its primary function as instilling in its members a commitment to this ideology, to the Bandera organization, and to the struggle for the liberation of Ukraine.

Initially, the constituency that SUM wished to attract was also different from that of Plast, as its membership was recruited from the 18–30-year age group. Moreover, SUM was intended to have mass appeal, including the majority of working-class or peasant youth—social groups where Plast was traditionally weakly represented. Indeed, the Plast leadership welcomed the emergence of SUM. Yaroslav Rak, a member of the Plast Command who also held an important position in the central representative body of Ukrainian emigrants, provided considerable support and encouragement. The leadership of the two organizations even shared offices.

Most importantly, Plast agreed that some of its experienced leaders and instructors from the rover-rank scout division could help SUM in its organizational activity and leader training. To avoid potential problems, on 7 November 1946, an agreement was signed between the two organizations that stressed the need for cooperation but also noted that dual membership, aside from some exceptions, should be discouraged. The cooperative relationship between Plast and SUM was also reflected in another agreement that was signed on 20 November 1947, whereby Plast agreed that several dozen rover-rank scouts would be granted temporary leave to help SUM build up its organization. Given their experience, these individuals soon occupied influential positions in SUM.

The problems began to emerge in 1949–50, when the regulations for SUM were completed. They were largely the work of Vasyl Markus, an experienced rover-rank *plastun* who based the document almost completely on the Plast model. This raised the possibility that the two organizations might engage in needless duplication of efforts. Another point



of tension was the fact that some of the *plastuny* seconded to help SUM took an oath of loyalty to SUM, creating a conflict of interest. Perhaps most disturbing to Plast was that the SUM leadership had decided not only to focus on the same age groups that Plast did but also to adopt an almost identical organizational structure. Namely, SUM divided its members into the 6–12, 13–18, 19–35 and 35+ age groups, very similar to the age structure of Plast. A similar system of ranks and merit badges was also introduced. And—especially at the grassroots level, SUM made an unconcealed effort to win over Plast members in all age categories.

The SUM message and method were clearly successful, for by 1950 its membership was close to 8,000 and it had become the largest Ukrainian youth organization in the diaspora. This was the second time in its history that Plast had to contend with a rival organization that threatened to subvert it and duplicated much of its program and structure.

In order to alleviate the rising tensions, the leaders of the two organizations signed another agreement on 17 February 1950. Both sides agreed that membership in their organizations should henceforth be mutually exclusive. Moreover, SUM acquiesced to Plast's request to alter its regulations so as not to duplicate those of Plast. Thereafter, the distinctions between the two organizations were emphasized more deliberately. SUM stressed that it was a mass organization, espousing the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism and preparing its members for the liberation struggle. In contrast, Plast informally but persistently leaned towards elitism, which was based not on social class but on the high demands it placed on its members, its character-building programs, rooted in the scouting ideals, and its commitment to non-partisan patriotism. As might be expected, even though the two organizations delineated their objectives, goals, and constituencies, they would find it difficult to avoid a sense of rivalry and competition.

The issue of Plast's relationship to SUM encouraged a debate within Plast about what its relationship should be vis-a-vis political parties—and especially the two competing wings of the OUN, the so-called *Banderivtsi* and *Melnykivtsi*. Because of the tensions that developed with the OUN(B)-dominated SUM, many of its followers insinuated that Plast leadership favored the OUN(M) faction. This led Volodymyr Yaniv, a prominent community and Plast leader to write a pamphlet entitled *Plast i politychna prynalezhnist* (Plast and Political Partisanship, Munich 1950), in which he argued that although Plast had produced many prominent leaders in both OUN factions, with regard to party politics it was an apolitical organization that sought to maintain tolerance towards all political and

ideological points of view (except Communism) among its members. However, this gave rise to a debate about what Plast's relationship to the two OUN factions should be. The issue was especially relevant as it became evident that adherents of the OUN(B) and OUN(M) factions, began to migrate their conflicts into Plast activities. Reacting swiftly, the Plast leadership banned any and all demonstrations of political partisanship in the organization. And the issue of how Plast should relate to political parties was pushed into the background.

\* \* \*

The rapid rebirth of Plast in the DP camps was a remarkable achievement. For fifteen years it had been a banned organization in its homeland. It had been forced to adopt surrogate structures, and the reduced cohort of Plast activists had to camouflage their activities. But when the opportunity to rebuild presented itself, these Plast loyalists moved quickly to take advantage of it. Moreover, it soon became apparent that the idea of scouting had established itself sufficiently deeply in the consciousness of Ukrainians, especially those from Eastern Galicia, and that years of repressive measures would not eliminate it. Therefore, with the initiative coming from both the top and the bottom, that is, all the key segments of DP society, a scouting organization almost identical to that of the 1920s, and encompassing about 4,500 members, was recreated in about two years. It was this brief but crucial period of intense rebuilding and reorganization that would allow Plast to successfully face the great challenges of the coming years.

Notes:

1. Sofroniv-Levyts'kyi, Vasył'. *Respublika za drotamy* (Toronto 1983), p. 14–15
2. Wytanowycz Halibe, Areta. 'Hei, zhyttia ty nashe iune, molode,' *Mittenwald 1946–1951* (Warren 2001), p. 462
3. Hladkyi, Ia. 'Druhyi plastovyi kongres,' *Plastovyi shliakh*, vol. 9 (1966), no. 2, p. 5
4. Figol', A. [...]
5. Iaremko, R., M. Saliak [Salak], and M. Dobrians'kyi. *Istoriia vidnovlennia ta diial'nosti Plastu v Nimechchyni v 1945–2010 rr.* [...]



*A merry-looking girl scout patrol. In the drudgery and uncertain circumstances of the postwar DP camps, Plast provided the youth with identity, camaraderie, and a shared purpose. Especially for the girls, this was an extraordinary opportunity to self-actualize and engage in character building and networking at no less an active level than the boys did. This would allow them to face the future with confidence and build productive new lives and communities in all the countries to which they emigrated.*

*A postwar dispersal map can be found on p. 404.*



# Chapter 8

## Plast in other countries after 1945

*Orest Dzulynsky*

In 1947–48, when the DP camps in Germany and Austria began to be dissolved, people began to emigrate to different countries. The majority of these people settled in the USA and Canada, some went to Australia, Argentina, and Great Britain, a few stayed in Germany, and others emigrated elsewhere. It is important to emphasize that in all cases, whether the groups were large or small, the Ukrainian immigrants adapted well to the new situations and settled in or organized communities in which youth organizations such as Plast were at the forefront.

### Tunisia

A remarkably unique situation occurred in Tunisia, where a group of Ukrainian professionals were contracted to build a dam in the mountains of the northern part of the country. A special village with an entire infrastructure was created for them and their families, called Beni M'Tir (or Metir). There, they organized Plast and conducted activities for their 50 children, under the leadership of scout-senior Volodymyr Savchak. The group of about 300 stayed in Tunisia from 1949 to 1956, when most families emigrated either to the USA or Canada.<sup>1</sup>



*Plast group from Beni M'Tir, Tunisia, on a hike, early 1950s.*

## Belgium

After the Second World War, a fairly large group of Ukrainians leaving the DP camps settled in Belgium, which required a labor force for its mining industry. The majority of the new immigrants worked in the mining industry on contract. Eventually a Ukrainian community evolved, with two youth organizations, Plast and SUM. Plast was helped by the fact that a small group of young students—who had all been members of Plast in the DP camps—moved to Belgium and settled in the city of Leuven, mainly for the purpose of attending university. Alongside their studies, some of them became quite active in Plast. They formed a local rover-rank scout group, conducted meetings, organized hikes, and devoted their energies as scout leaders to the junior and boy and girl scouts. Although the Plast group in Leuven was relatively small in comparison to SUM, some of the *plastuny* aided SUM in its program activity. Plast in Belgium actually existed for a relatively short time. By 1954, most of this group had resettled in the USA and Canada, where some of them, now of rover and scout-senior rank, became very active in Plast.<sup>2</sup>



*Plast members participating in 1st Congress of Ukrainians in Belgium, 1948.*



*Plast scouts performing Ukrainian dances.*

## Brazil

The historical background of Ukrainians' settlement in Brazil is similar to the ones in the USA and Canada in that there were several waves of immigration to Brazil, beginning in 1870. Most of them settled in the state of Paraná. The first waves of settlers were farmers and construction workers. Their community and social life was centered around the church, run mostly by the monastic Basilian Order.

The third wave of Ukrainian immigrants, numbering about 7,000, arrived in 1947–51 from the DP camps in Germany and Austria. This group was socially more diverse, including many intellectuals, who settled mostly in the cities. The centers of Ukrainian community life were in Prudentópolis and Curitiba. Among the arrivals in 1949 were DPs who had been members of Plast in Germany or Austria. As in the case of other countries, the HPB in Germany appointed a leader-designate to organize Plast in Brazil—Nina Mudryk.

At the beginning, Plast activity was carried out under the auspices and as a separate unit of the Society for the Preservation of Ukrainian Culture. Regular scout meetings were held in Curitiba and contacts were made with more distant locations. However, it was not an easy task; there was little knowledge or understanding of Plast and its aims, especially among the earlier generations of settlers. After the departure of Nina Mudryk and her family to Canada, Plast activity became practically non-existent in Brazil.

In 1980s it was revived, though, mainly through the efforts of an energetic young student and community leader, Kornelii Shmulyk. His efforts to revive an interest in Plast caught the attention of the HPB, which assisted the young enthusiast by financing his and others' participation

in leadership training. Plast in Brazil was reactivated for a few years. In 1995 an assembly was held, a new constitution was drawn up, and the new organization was proclaimed as *Plast Brasil*. Operations continued for a while, but lack of enthusiasm among the scout leaders, and some internal squabbles, resulted in the termination of the official organization.<sup>3</sup>

Notes:

1. Svidzyns'ka, Ol'ha. 'Plast v Tunisi,' *Al'manakh 100-littia Plastu* (New York–Toronto–Lviv 2012), p. 326
2. Haida, Ihor. 'Plast u Bel'hiï,' *Al'manakh 100-littia Plastu* (New York–Toronto–Lviv 2012), p. 196
3. Parakhoniak-Rubel, Iaroslava. 'Plast u Brazylïi,' *Al'manakh 100-littia Plastu* (New York–Toronto–Lviv 2012), p. 198



*Plast in the DP camps benefited from the compact population and surplus energies of the young Ukrainian men and women. Soon, however, they would leave to other countries to find work, be it in Tunisia or Belgium or faraway Brasil, the USA, and elsewhere. Their enthusiasm for community activism would stand them in good stead in meeting the new challenges of dispersion, assimilation, and materialism.*

## Chapter 9

# Plast in the USA, 1948–65

As the wave of Ukrainian DPs, numbering close to 100,000, began to arrive in the United States in the late 1940s, a completely new, dynamic, and extended period in the history of Plast began. At the outset, it was marked by the difficult transition from Europe to America. The immigrants experienced deeply disconcerting changes in every aspect of life. Unprecedented problems as well as unexpected opportunities confronted Plast as it attempted to reconstitute itself in the new and, in many ways, strange land. The ideologues of Plast had always proclaimed that in its ranks a new type of person (*novyi liud*) was being created, one who was willing to face daunting challenges and able to surmount them. In America, that claim would be put to the test—and resoundingly affirmed.

\* \* \*

Before the exodus from Germany and Austria began, the leaders of Plast had prepared carefully for its rebirth in the various countries where its members settled. Nonetheless, in America as well as elsewhere, there were many unexpected difficulties. Most immediately striking was the rapid and widespread dispersal of the immigrants within the United States. Upon arrival, they spread out among the cities of the northeastern and central states, following family connections, friends, employment opportunities, or sponsoring organizations. Hundreds, even thousands, of kilometres often separated their newly formed communities. This was a dramatic contrast to the close proximity in which Ukrainians lived in Western Ukraine or the DP camps of Germany and Austria. A Plast activist noted that “back home” it took 2–3 hours by train to go to a conference, but in the USA the time required was often 15–20 hours. There were even difficulties assembling Plast members in a single city, because they were so widely scattered in the large American urban centers.

The pressing need to find work also had a tremendous impact on the continuation of Plast activities. In the DP camps, full-time employment was largely unavailable, and Plast activists could devote much of their time and energy to their organization. In the US, however, work—usually physical in nature and demanding long hours—was a condition



of survival for the immigrants, leaving little time or energy for other activities. Consequently, from the outset one heard complaints about the difficulty of assembling Plast leaders, because their differing work schedules prevented them from meeting.

It soon became evident that in America, where even youths were expected to work in their free time, finding time for scouting activities was not an easy matter. A more insidious aspect of employment also became quickly apparent: the so-called “dollar fever,” that is, the urge to earn ever greater amounts of money, and the tendency to succumb to what was viewed as a characteristically American “disease”—rampant materialism. This, many feared, would sooner or later undermine the idealism that had been the hallmark of Plast activity, on which it so greatly depended.

Another problem was the fact that in the United States, Plast had no connection with the American school system. Indeed, the American schools, which the vast majority of immigrants attended, posed major problems. They exposed the immigrants, immediately and pervasively, to assimilatory Americanizing pressures—the famous American “melting pot” concept—that were quite intense in the 1940s and 1950s. While Plast leaders encouraged Ukrainian youth, of course, to obtain an American education, they rejected the cultural influences of the “American street,” which usually first appeared in the form of comics, movies, chewing gum, and even “disrespectful behavior” toward elders. Even the Ukrainian Catholic schools that existed in the larger urban centers, and which a minority of the immigrants attended, did little to support Plast or to stem assimilatory influences.

Nevertheless, along with the difficulties the American environment also offered Plast encouraging advantages and opportunities. The most important of these was unprecedented freedom of action. For those who recalled the watchful paternalism of the Austrian bureaucrats, the brutal repression of the Polish authorities, and the mild but persistent supervision of the occupation authorities in the DP camps, the liberating fact was that the American federal and local authorities, the American scouting movement, and American society in general did not interfere—indeed, showed no interest—in Plast. This was an empowering experience for its members and leaders, who quickly realized that what they achieved depended on them, not the authorities.

Paradoxically, the time- and energy-consuming jobs that Plast activists were employed at had a positive effect on the organization.



*In the early 1920s, Ukrainian scouts shared activities with American scouts in New York City.*

Namely, within a relatively short time it became apparent that Plast supporters and members, especially the scout-seniors aged 30+, could (and did) contribute considerable sums of money to their organization. Soon, Plast accumulated greater financial resources than it had ever had before. These, in turn, allowed it to purchase facilities and conduct activities of the kind that could only be dreamed of previously. In time, even the problem of vast distances separating Plast branches and individual members was mitigated, at least in part, by the relatively rapid acquisition of automobiles by the immigrants.

Another advantage that America offered was that it already had an existing and sizable Ukrainian community, established by previous waves of immigrants. Although the children of the “old immigrants” were largely assimilated and therefore did not relate to Plast or what it stood for, a considerable network of Ukrainian organizations, churches, and schools could and did provide support, especially in the early stages of Plast’s development in the USA.

Finally, Plast’s greatest asset in the USA, especially in the early years of its existence in the new land, was the large cohort of its leaders, activists, and members that had chosen to settle in America—by far the largest of all the countries to which the DPs emigrated. It was not only a matter of numbers, however; these activists carried with them the tremendous momentum and commitment that had been built up in the DP camps. This would be a crucial factor in the successful transplantation of Plast from Europe to America.

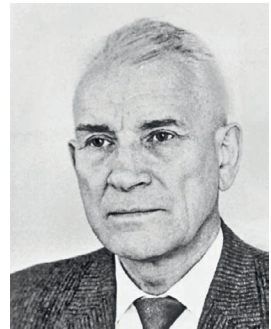
## National Plast Executive (KPS)

As soon as emigration to the us began in 1947–48, Plast in Munich appointed Maria Khomyn, who had settled in Philadelphia, to be its leader-designate in the country. But at this point there were only a few Plast members in the USA, widely scattered; consequently, her efforts at organization made practically no headway. To expedite matters, on 1 March 1948 Leonid Romaniuk was nominated as leader-designate for the fraternities and boys' divisions, while Khomyn retained responsibility for the sororities and girls' divisions. This arrangement also proved to be ineffective after Romaniuk moved to Los Angeles. An attempt to divide the duties between Romaniuk in the west and Myroslav Rakovsky in the east also failed, mostly because of the latter's ill health. Matters became even worse when Khomyn resigned and Romaniuk, isolated in Los Angeles, did likewise.

In this critical situation, on 15 August 1949 the HPS appointed Evhen Gut-Kulchytsky, who was based in Detroit, as leader-designate for the entire us. With the appointment of this energetic, committed, and experienced individual—he had been a Plast leader in interwar Czechoslovakia—the organization of Plast in the USA began in earnest.

Gut-Kulchytsky's first step was to assemble a group that would function as the national executive of Plast in the USA until an elective assembly could be held. After several attempts, a National Plast Board (*Kraiovyi plastovyi provid*, or KPP), based primarily in Detroit, was constituted with the following membership: Evhen Gut-Kulchytsky as president, Falya Liubinetska as scout leader for girls, Evhen Zubalsky (soon replaced by the active Oleksander Berezhnysky) as scout leader for boys; and Bohdan Diakiv, manager of financial affairs. In addition, by December 1949 there were about 110 newly arrived scout-seniors in the us, on whose support the KPP could count.

The goals that Gut-Kulchytsky and his associates set for themselves were daunting. First and foremost, they sought to establish an organizational framework that would embrace the individual Plast members who were arriving from Germany in ever-increasing numbers and spontaneously forming widely scattered Plast groups. Plast also had to establish a legal basis on which it could exist in the



*Evhen (Eugene) Gut-Kulchytsky was appointed by the HPS in 1949 to organize Plast youth in the United States.*



*First Plast Spring Fest, in Bound Brook, NJ, April 1948.*

new land, and the US scouting movement had to be approached to explore the possibility of cooperation. Contacts also needed to be established with existing Ukrainian organizations in the US, a delicate matter in view of the tensions that existed between the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches.

Realizing that it should rely only on its own resources, Plast had to establish a financial base as soon as possible. Finally, the national board committed itself to following the traditional Plast ideology completely, rather than making major ideological adjustments to conform to the new environment. Since the majority of Plast members were settling in the US, the American board realized that it was primarily responsible for providing leadership and maintaining the unity of an organization whose members were scattered throughout the world. Adhering to the tried-and-true path was viewed as the least divisive and most effective way of attaining this goal.

At the organizational level, the KPP concentrated on registering all Plast members who arrived in the US. Newcomers were expected to register with the KPP or with a local branch within a month of arrival, showing documents from Germany or Austria that they were members in good standing. The national board also monitored the various Plast groups that sprang up spontaneously, confirming their leadership, seeing to it that they followed worldwide regulations, and requiring them to send in monthly activity reports.

The ranks of Plast in the US swelled rapidly. The first membership list that Gut-Kulchytsky compiled in January 1950 consisted of 535 members; by September the number rose to 1,055, and in the spring of 1951 it reached 1,617. When Gut-Kulchytsky took on his duties, five cities (New



*The Siromantsi men's Plast fraternity maintains a specific interest in literature and publishing Plast materials. In the photo is group in 1960, from left, front row: Roman Andrushkiw, Jaroslav Palyvoda, Yarko Kozak, Bohdan Andrushkiw, Yuriy Hodowanec, Lubomyr Onyshkevych, Roman Voronka. Back row: Theophil Staruch, Myron Babiuk, Titus Hewryk, Bohdan Korduba, Andrij Worobec, Andrij Hornjatkevych, Jurij Klufas, Nestor Shust.*

York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland) had organized Plast groups; twenty months later there were 30 city branches.

Coordinating and monitoring the activities of the expanding membership involved much greater effort than expected and Gut-Kulchytsky noted that organizational and basic bureaucratic work prevented the KPP from concentrating on its primary function, i.e., character-building programs and the development of committed, patriotic Ukrainians. To illustrate the purely secretarial burden that he had to deal with, Gut-Kulchytsky reported that in 1949 he received about 60 letters a month dealing with Plast matters, and sent out over 50 per month; by 1951, he was receiving over 300 Plast-related letters per month and dispatching about 240 per month.

To cope with the massive workload, Gut-Kulchytsky refrained from seeking employment for a twenty-month period, and devoted all his time and energy to Plast. Not everyone appreciated Gut-Kulchytsky's insistence on accurate recordkeeping, punctual reporting, and strict adherence to national board directives, and they complained that Plast was becoming too bureaucratic and focused on paperwork. But the fact remained that under Gut-Kulchytsky's leadership, Plast established and expanded its organizational framework faster and more effectively than any other Ukrainian organization in America.

Aware from the outset that in a vast land like the us, effective communications were crucial, Gut-Kulchytsky established the bulletin *Plastovyi lystok* (Plast Leaflet) in October 1949. Initially, it was a modest pamphlet of 8–10 mimeographed pages that Gut-Kulchytsky produced monthly, distributing 400–600 copies. However, it proved to be invaluable as a means for the various KPP officers to inform Plast members, and especially the leaders of city branches, about organizational regulations, program directives, and activities of newly formed units. Moreover, it served as an important source for literature and instructions on scouting, it provided the addresses of new arrivals, allowing old contacts to be reestablished, and it served as a forum for exchanging views on which directions the organization should take in the new environment. Perhaps most importantly, it functioned as a crucial link between the national headquarters in Detroit and the widely scattered city branches of Plast in the USA.

Past experience had taught the Plast leadership that “legalizing” the organization, that is, becoming a legally recognized entity, was essential. Citing precedents from the interwar period in Galicia, some suggested that Plast reach an agreement with an already existing organization in the us that could act as its legal sponsor. Others raised the possibility of creating a single American-Canadian entity. When it became evident that legal sponsorship was unnecessary and that unification with the Canadian Plast was legally impossible, it was decided to apply for legal status in the state of Michigan. After some delays, on 25 July 1951 the state of Michigan registered Plast as an independent and incorporated entity, with the right to create and maintain branches in other states.

Since Plast could only depend on its own financial resources, the KPP placed great emphasis on the punctual payment of membership dues. This had traditionally been a problematic issue. Nonetheless, within the first year of Gut-Kulchytsky’s leadership, about two-thirds of the members had paid their dues, for a total of \$1,750. The monthly rates were modest but critical; as a result, by September 1950 the KPP had an annual budget of \$6,005 and a cash flow of over \$10,000—impressive figures, considering the nearly penniless state of many of the newly arrived Plast members.

Realizing that Plast could not subsist on membership dues alone, Gut-Kulchytsky announced in October 1949 the creation of a Plast Fund that would be based on additional and voluntary contributions from its members and supporters. Within a month, primarily scout-seniors (many of who were still unemployed) had contributed \$1,500 to the fund. However, another source of income, which grew in the coming decade, was the custom of Christmas caroling by Plast groups in Ukrainian homes. A large

part of the donations collected went to support the national board, and the rest was used by the city branches.

It had always been the dream of the Plast leaders to have a building of their own. Such a dream was impossible to realize in Galicia or the DP camps. In America, however, such an undertaking proved to be surprisingly feasible. In May 1950, Gut-Kulchytsky launched a campaign to gather funds for the purchase of a building that would serve as the headquarters of the KPB, as well as of the HPS, and a home for the city branch. Ten months later, in March 1951, Plast USA became the proud owner of a 14-room building, which cost \$18,000 and on which a \$5,000 down payment was made.

In the summer of 1951, prompted in large part by the recent arrival of Chief Scout Severyn Levytsky, a 30-acre plot of land was purchased in North Collins, near Buffalo, NY. Named *Novyi Sokil* (New Sokil), after the most famous Plast camp in the Carpathians, it was the first Plast-owned scout camping site in the USA. As Gut-Kulchytsky noted, despite the many problems encountered in the new land, “we can survive somehow here in America.”<sup>1</sup>



*Severyn “Siryi Lev” Levytsky, Chief Scout in Plast, from the 1947 Mittenwald World Scout Jamboree until 1962.*

## **National Plast conferences (KPZ)**

The unexpectedly rapid growth of Plast in the USA required calling a national conference to assess what had been achieved in the 20 months since Gut-Kulchytsky took on the leadership, and to establish what needed to be done in the future. Consequently, the first general meeting of the American Plast was held on 14–15 April 1951 in the Ukrainian National Home in New York. About 200 Plast members attended; of these, 57 were elected delegates from 26 (of 31) centers (*oseredky*), representing a total membership of approximately 1,600. In his greetings, Atanas Figol, the head of the HPS, which was still based in Germany, pointed out that the conference was “historic” because, like the Karlsfeld, Germany assembly of 1945, it signaled the renewal of Plast in a totally new environment.

Certainly, the tone of the conference, which was chaired by Yurij Starosolsky, a well known scout leader from Galicia, was optimistic. The leadership proudly noted that the organization had quickly and effectively established roots in the new country, and that the initial organizational phase had been successfully completed. This event, moreover, allowed members who had not seen each other since leaving Germany to reestablish direct contact and to exchange views on a wide range of issues.

There was general agreement that henceforth Plast should concentrate on its traditional goal—the development of morally, ethically, and physically strong, and nationally conscious, individuals, while preserving the Ukrainian heritage. To achieve these goals, Plast would have to concentrate on developing strong ties with the parents of its members, and with Ukrainian churches, schools, and organizations. As the country where the majority of its leaders (scout-seniors) had settled, the American Plast felt obligated to also shoulder the bulk of responsibility for worldwide Plast development. This was done by the KPR as a board of governors consisting of leading and experienced members of the Plast leadership. The KPR then appointed a national executive (KPS); the name change from KPP to KPS thus occurred at this first assembly.

In view of the fact that so much of the Plast membership was concentrated in the New York area, the decision was made in March 1954 to move the KPS permanently from Detroit to New York. Located in temporary premises in the Ukrainian National Home on Second Avenue, the Plast national head office had a small staff. Elected every two years, the KPS was responsible for organizing, supervising, and leading the component units of Plast in the USA. The national scout leaders for boys and girls received monthly (and, later, quarterly) reports from local leaders about the status and activities of their units. In short, from the outset the KPS was meant to provide strong centralized leadership and control.

Another function of the KPS national executive was to identify individuals who deserved special recognition for their work in Plast. To this end, a tri-level system of Plast rewards was developed by the HPB. It was regularly and judiciously applied, carrying with it a good degree of recognition and prestige among Plast members.

Subsequent KPZ national conferences were held every two years. A major innovation at the second Conference was the election of KPS officers directly by the delegates, not through appointment by the KPR; this practice continued at all subsequent national conferences. At the third KPZ, emphasis was placed on disseminating more information about Plast activity and the importance of camp programming. The year 1960



marked the conclusion of the initial or building phase of Plast in the USA. The report presented at the fifth national conference highlighted the steady growth of the organization.

Plast membership in the USA							
1950	1951	1953	1955	1957	1960	1963	1965
535	1,617	2,164	2,690	2,923	3,215	3,760	3,884

As time passed, the Plast leadership in the USA was reinforced by fresh new and younger cadres. The KPS passed into the hands of two extraordinarily committed, experienced, and talented leaders—Olha Kuzmowycz and Yuri Ferencevych. In the coming years, these and other members of the younger generation of Plast activists would have a major and highly positive impact on its development.

## City branches

With the HPB in Detroit, small but dedicated groups of recently arrived scout-seniors, at their own initiative, began to organize Plast groups in the various cities where Ukrainian immigrants had settled. Motivated by fond memories of their scouting days in prewar Eastern Galicia, by the intense outburst of Plast activity in wartime and postwar Germany and Austria, and by the quickly apparent and pressing need to preserve the Ukrainian youth in America from being assimilated, they took seriously the requirement imposed by the organization that all scout-seniors were duty-bound to commit themselves to rebuilding Plast in the New World as soon as possible. In many cases, these dedicated individuals had hardly managed to find accommodations, “unpack their suitcases,” and begin looking for work when they set about devoting their spare time and energy to establishing Plast groups in their strange and difficult new environment. The commitment of these individuals to the reestablishment of Plast in the USA reached a level that was never duplicated in later years.

A major problem was finding appropriate premises for meetings and activities. Here the Ukrainian churches, both Orthodox and Greco-Catholic, proved to be of great assistance. Often they allowed the new groups to meet, at least temporarily, in parish halls and offices. Newly formed credit unions such as *Samopomich* (Self-Reliance) did likewise; this was mostly in large cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland, where established communities of “old immigrants” already lived. As new waves of immigrants arrived, the number of members and supporters

of Plast grew rapidly. The tendency of Ukrainians to seek out their own and to live in compact groups was quite strong at that time.

### *Mid-sized branches*

The mid-sized Plast city branches in the USA included Baltimore, Buffalo, Hartford, Newark, New Haven, Hartford, Jersey City, Minneapolis, Paterson-Passaic, Elizabeth, Rochester, Syracuse-Utica, and Trenton. Mostly in the northeast US, these were medium-sized cities that had “old immigrant” Ukrainian communities. Their Plast groups usually had a membership of 50–150, with a hard-core group of 3–6 scout-seniors who provided the leadership.



*Plast junior scout campers at the Bobrivka camp, outside Hartford, CT, attending summer programs in 1959.*

### *Large branches*

New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland were considered to be large Plast city branches. A characteristic of such branches was that they benefited from the leadership of a critical mass of a dozen or more adult Plast members, who quickly established all divisions—junior and boy and girl scouts, as well as rover-rank scouts and scout-seniors—and embarked on a full-fledged Plast activity program. Moreover, the Ukrainian communities in these cities were large enough to support the formation of relatively sizable and active *Plast-pryiat* parent auxiliaries. Finally, such large Plast branches had the resources to embark on, or at least to consider in rather short order, the purchase of buildings and even



*Plast girl scouts in New York City, 1950.*

the acquisition of scout camping sites. As a result, they became from the outset the major focal points of Plast activity in the United States.

The **New York** Plast branch was the first to be established in the us. It was on 1 May 1949, in the premises of the *Samopomich* Credit Union, that 37 Ukrainian scouts—5 scout-seniors and 32 rover-rank scouts as well as teenage boy and girl scouts—met and resolved to create a city branch. It had an initial membership of 63, some of whom lived in Jersey City, Newark, and Trenton.

Given its early start and the large, growing number of members, the New York City branch of Plast was the first in the us to engage in regular Plast activities. Because the organization did not yet have legal status, it functioned initially as a youth branch under the aegis of the *Samopomich* Credit Union, and held its meetings in the premises of the credit union or the local Ukrainian Orthodox church. Because of the constant influx of immigrants, the New York branch was able to take on a full-fledged structure very quickly, organizing a troop each of boy and girl scouts, and several dens of junior scouts. Moreover, by September it had 18 scout-seniors and 29 rover-rank scouts, a sizable cohort of leaders and administrators.

In June and July 1949, the New York branch held the first Plast summer scouting camps in America. On 30 June–8 July, 17 girl scouts led by Anna Boycun pitched their tents at the Ukrainian Village, a property in Bound Brook, NJ, owned by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

And on 1–14 July, 12 rover-rank and boy scouts held their camp, which was commanded by Markian Bachynsky. Encouraged by the initiation of regular scouting activities in their organization, on 3–5 September the New Yorkers organized the first Plast assembly (*zustrich*) in North America, which took place at the Bound Brook site. It attracted 10 scout-seniors, 39 rover-rank scouts, and 42 boy and girl scouts from New York, as well as 16 Plast members from other nearby cities.

By 2 December 1951 a large and active *Plast-pryiat* auxiliary was formed, led by Bohdan Sobolta. One of its most pressing goals was to find suitable premises for the rapidly growing city branch, which suffered from having to repeatedly move from one facility to another for its regular weekly activities and special assemblies.

In the fall of 1951, a committee consisting of Yaroslav Boydunyk, Bohdan Sobolta, Orest Klufas, Volodymyr Sushkiw, Mykhailo Juzeniw, and Mykhailo Pezhansky was formed to consider the acquisition of a plot of land suitable for scouting camps. Within a year, the New York Plast branch collected \$10,000—a very impressive amount in those early immigrant days. Supported by neighboring city branches, in March 1953 the New York branch purchased a 350-acre property near East Chatham, NY, for Plast USA, for \$35,000; it was named *Vovcha Tropa* (Wolf's Path).

A committee was founded in 1961 by Yaroslav Padoch to organize the purchase of a Plast building in New York. Naming itself the Plast



Partial aerial view of *Vovcha Tropa*, the 350-acre Plast camp in New York state, acquired in 1953.

Foundation, and later led by R. Baranowsky, on 22 February 1964 it signed a contract to purchase a large building for Plast at 144 Second Avenue, next to the Ukrainian National Home, for \$86,500. Finally, the nearly 700 Ukrainian scouts of New York had their own building. A new cooperative group, Molode Zhyttia (Young Life), was formed to operate a small store in the new Plast building that sold uniforms, literature, and camping equipment to Plast members throughout the USA.

Similar developments occurred in other large city branches, like Philadelphia, Detroit Chicago. The Plast city branch in **Chicago** had the advantage of being based in a large urban center with a well-established immigrant Ukrainian community that was supplemented by a large wave of DP immigrants. Its disadvantage was that it was comparatively distant from the other major Plast city branches in the east. As a result, and unlike other Plast branches, Chicago often functioned in isolation as far as scouting camp activity was concerned, including scout leader training.

In 1960 the Chicago scouts, and the entire Plast organization, were shaken by a terrible tragedy: six young Ukrainian boy scouts drowned in



*Wet after orienteering games, Spring Fest, 1963. From left: Ada Bailova-Osinchuk, Oksana Klym-Volchuk, Darka Poninska, Slava Parakhoniak-Rubel, Khrystia Kvasnytsia-Pevna, Teresa Shark-Ben, and Oksana Kravcheniuk.*

the Wisconsin River while camping at the *Velykyi Luh* site. This catastrophe completely demoralized the Chicago city branch of Plast for years to come. Remarkably, it not only continued to function but later even flourished, as reflected in the following figures:

Plast membership in the Chicago city branch			
1950	1953	1960	1963
113	243	377	412

At the center of the American automobile industry, **Detroit** attracted a large number of Ukrainian immigrants, and already had a number of established institutions when the DPS arrived. But the key to the dynamic activism of the Detroit city branch was its core group of experienced and committed scout-seniors and rover-rank scouts, including Mykhailo Bazhansky, Falyna Liubinetska, Ivanka Kucher, Daria Boychuk, Vasyl Kolodchyn, Petro Rohatynsky, Roman Tatarsky, Lubomyr Hewko, and Yaroslav Romakh. They helped to establish the city as an early center of Plast activity, not only in the US but in the world at that time. Indeed, initially it was planned that most members of the HPB still in Germany should resettle en masse to Detroit, and they did.

The purchase of the Plast building in Detroit in 1951—the first in the US—was of crucial importance. The building served several functions: it was the headquarters of the US and worldwide Plast executives, the office of the major Plast publication *Molode zhyttia* (Young Life), and premises for the Detroit city branch. Moreover, it was an important community hub, providing office space for the Ukrainian physicians' and engineers' associations and the *Samopomich* Credit Union.

The Detroit Plast contingent provided the resources not only to lead a rapidly growing branch but also to take on key posts in the US and worldwide Plast executives. Along with the steady growth in membership came organizational development: in 1953 committees were established for Scout Leader Training and Economic Affairs, and a strong parents' auxiliary group. A year earlier, Mykhailo Bazhansky initiated a very active Literature and Arts Club, which lasted until the late 1950s. Falyna Liubinetska ran a Plast radio program, and an occasional newsletter was issued.

Having a strong manpower potential, Detroit often hosted training courses for junior and boy and girl scout leaders, as well as city branch executive members. It also had a very active rover-rank and scout-seniors Sea Scout fraternity, the *Chornomortsi*, led by Lubomyr Hewko, that acquired its own vessel and embarked on lengthy voyages on the Great Lakes.

A crucial event in the early history of the Detroit scouts was the acquisition of their own camping site at *Dibrova* near Brighton, MI. In September 1954, a group of Plast activists, led by R. Tatarsky and A. Milianych, purchased a 150-acre tract of land with a lake, for use as a community resort area, and eventually assigned 16 choice acres, called *Zelenyi Yar*, for the exclusive use of Plast (it subsequently acquired out-right ownership of this parcel of land, in 1959). Henceforth, this became the site for the city branch's outdoor activities and scouting camps.

Plast membership in the Detroit city branch				
1949	1953	1956	1959	1962
51	188	210	267	333

A special membership category was established for remote Plast members without city branch affiliation. They were called *samitnyky* (loners), and participated in Plast programs by correspondence.

## Noteworthy events

### *Death of Severyn Levytsky*

Severyn “Siryj Lev” Levytsky died on 30 January 1962 in Buffalo, NY. One of the leaders of Plast since almost its earliest days, he was elected Chief Scout (*Nachalny Plastun*) at the Plast jamboree in Mittenwald, Germany. He was buried in Buffalo.

### *International Plast Jamboree (UMPZ)*

The 50th anniversary of Plast was celebrated on 25 August–3 September 1962 with the first international Plast jamboree in the USA. With its slogan “Preserve the Past – Work for the Future,” it reflected a youth organization on the rise, a product of the energy and dynamism of recent immigrants who had successfully adapted to their new homeland. The UMPZ took place at *Vovcha Tropa* in East Chatham, NY, the largest Plast camping site in the USA.

The camp director of the jamboree was Yuri Ferencevych, aided by a staff of 56 individuals and scout leaders who oversaw ten separate sub-camps. There were 1,716 participants, of whom 1,422 came from the USA and 216 from Canada, with small delegations also representing Australia, Argentina, Germany, and Britain. Moreover, in its final days the jamboree welcomed about 60 visiting scouts from Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Lithu-

ania, and Russia, as well as local American scouts; a large delegation of about 50 SUM members also visited the event. A well-illustrated 56-page journal for the participants, as well as an English-language booklet, were published on this occasion. The success of the jamboree was an indication of the transition accomplished from the Old World to the New World.



*Over 1,700 people participated in a Divine Liturgy during the 1962 UMPZ at the Vovcha Tropa camp, East Chatham, NY.*

\* \* \*

The arrival of former DPs to the United States confronted Plast with great problems as well as promising opportunities. Never before had Plast members been as widely dispersed as in the United States, and this in a land that in many ways was quite different from the European countries from which they came. There were also great advantages to living in the USA. The government showed little or no interest in how the Ukrainian scouts conducted themselves. Indeed, American society left Plast to its own devices.

Considering its recent past, this was a most unusual and welcome situation. Plast had prepared for emigration from the DP camps with trepidation. Despite the limited financial abilities of the new Ukrainian immigrants, for the first time in the history of Plast, its city branches could purchase their own buildings and scout camping sites. Many of these early immigrants still retained the enthusiasm and dynamism for



Ukrainian organizational work that had evolved in the refugee camps. Moreover, they still maintained the close personal ties and connections that had been sustained and fortified in the German camps. Finally, the DP immigrants realized that an organization like Plast was a way of fending off the threat of assimilation. Their belief that they would, sooner or later, return to their homes in Ukraine was still unbowed, and Plast—along with the Ukrainian Church and the NTsh/UVAN—was one of the strongest guarantors of safeguarding the Ukrainian national awareness, language, and culture until that day came.

Notes:

1. Gut-Kul'chyts'kyi [Kulchytsky], Evhen. [...], *Plastovyi lystok*, 1 October 1949, p. 1



*Poster advertising the 50th Jubilee Plast Jamboree, 28 August–3 September 1962 at Vovcha Tropa camp, East Chatham, NY, USA.*

# Chapter 10

## Plast in the USA, 1966–75\*

By the mid-1960s, Plast had completed the longest period of uninterrupted activity in its history—that is, it had been able to function freely and openly for more than 15 years. This made it possible for the organization to reach a high point in its existence in the USA in the 1960s and early 1970s. By now it was clear that Plast could not only survive in a new and unfamiliar environment, it could continue to grow in it. Especially encouraging was the fact that—unlike an increasing number of Ukrainian organizations in the diaspora—Plast appeared capable of attracting members of the younger, American-bred generation to join the aging European-raised veterans in their efforts. This is not to say that vexing, even threatening, problems did not emerge. A range of difficulties, reflecting for the most part the powerful forces of assimilation, already posed increasingly serious challenges. However, during the dynamic 1960s and early 1970s, it appeared that Plast possessed the wherewithal to deal with them.

### **National Plast Executive (KPS)**

By the early 1960s, the KPS in the USA had developed a clear-cut structure and well-defined functions. In general, it was responsible for guiding Plast in the USA toward the attainment of its traditional goals—the development of strong, physically and psychologically healthy individuals and patriotic Ukrainians. More specifically, the National Executive sought the means, both new and old, of maintaining the relevance of its traditional values. Their goal was to facilitate Plast leaders' effectiveness in four key areas: organization, supervision, training, and representation.

#### *Organization*

The KPS was charged with maintaining the unity and uniformity of an organization of more than 4,000 members, dispersed in about 30 different locations scattered over the vast area of the eastern and central United States. To achieve this goal, the KPS formulated and issued an on-

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\* Chapters 10–11 revised by Orest Dzulynsky.



*Senior Canadian and American Plast leaders met in 1960 in Buffalo to coordinate activities. From left: Oleksander Berezhnysky, Tsiopa Paliji, Omelan Tarnavskyj, Bohdanna Salaban, Ivan Skochylas, Severyn Levytsky, Mykhailo Bazhansky, Olha Kuzmowycz, Bohdan Krawciw, Larissa Onyshkevych, Yuriy Piaseckyj, Yaro Hladkyi, Iko Stecura, Osyp Boychuk.*

going series of guidelines and directives to the city branches concerning all aspects of Plast activity. It was also responsible for developing methods of attracting new members. Its secretariat kept membership files and monitored the collection of membership dues.

The organization and leadership of special events—both those related to Plast and to the Ukrainian community as a whole—was especially time-consuming. For example, the US KPS formed special committees to organize and carry out national and international jamborees that were held every 10 years. It was also responsible for arranging Plast's participation in numerous community events and functions. In 1964, the US KPS oversaw the participation of about 1,500 Plast members in the massively attended unveiling of the Taras Shevchenko monument in Washington, DC.

Another function of the US KPS was to maintain contact and coordinate activities with the executives in other countries, especially Canada, as well as with the HPB. Moreover, it was responsible for organizing numerous conferences, seminars, and courses for local leaders, and biennial assemblies (usually held at the Soyuzivka Resort in upstate New York). Plast USA, being the largest such organization in the diaspora and

having the largest number of scout-seniors, had a strong influence on policies and decisions at the CUPO international Plast conferences (*Konferentsiia ukrainskykh plastovykh orhanizatsii*).

Among the many responsibilities of the US KPS executive, unquestionably the most important organizational activity was organizing the summer camping program. The KPS reviewed all proposed camps, including dates, locations, and programs. Through its National Camp Committee (КТК), the US KPS also shouldered the difficult task of finding qualified staff to lead these camps. Moreover, it was KPS that faced the challenge of developing specialized new camping programs when it became clear that the large stationary camps were becoming less attractive to the older boy and girl scouts.

As indicated previously, Plast USA maintained a centralized system of governance (a carry-over from Europe) that put a great strain on its executive, especially given that all the KPS members were volunteers. An example of one of the difficulties that the KPS encountered in carrying out its mandate is shown in a 1965 report (see box).

### Inspection plan

At its meeting on 01 February 1964, the US KPS approved a plan for carrying out reviews of boy and girl scout troops. The national scoutmasters for boys and girls were to evaluate, first and foremost, the character-building work of the scout troops and junior scout packs, as well as of the rover-rank division. “Unfortunately, some initiated reviews soon had to be halted because the KPS concluded that there was insufficient cooperation on the part of branches and their division leaders. Agreed inspection dates were often changed by branch representatives, or too few scout leaders would attend meetings. Consequently, it was impossible to obtain a clear picture of the actual state of affairs. In other cases, the visiting scoutmasters would perceive that the troops or packs in question had been specially prepared for the inspection day, while the level of their activity throughout the year was far below the favorable impression created on a single day.”<sup>1</sup>

Inspections of summer camps took place regularly and systematically, and detailed instructions and reporting forms were utilized. “Here we do not have the problems that we have encountered with the branch troops and packs. In contrast, one day spent in a camp can provide an accurate impression of the state of the camp, its participants, and its leadership.”<sup>2</sup>



*North American members of Lisovi Mavky sorority, High Park, Toronto, 2015. lm sorority has a specific interest in publishing Plast materials.*



*Lisovi Chorty fraternity, Vovcha Tropa camp, 2011. One of the first fraternities in Plast, with members throughout the world, Lch has a longstanding commitment to running scout and leadership training camps.*

## *Training*

In view of the great importance that Plast placed on proper training of its scout leaders, the US KPS devoted a large part of its time and energies to this task. In summer, this took the form of one- and two-week specialized camps for boy and girl scout leaders, as well as workshops for junior scout den chiefs. At other times of the year, seminars and conferences for branch officers were also organized. The KPS took charge of providing and updating appropriate instructions and manuals.

## *Representation*

Functioning as the leader of the organization, the US KPS had numerous representative and diplomatic functions to fulfill. It maintained contact with the KPS in neighboring Canada, and with the national executives in Germany, Britain, Argentina, and Australia, and report to the HPB. In addition, the KPS was responsible for keeping up relations with the Ukrainian Youth Association (SUM) and other Ukrainian youth organizations; this was often a sensitive matter. The National Plast Executive also maintained contact with other ethnic scouting organizations, especially those of the Baltic nations, Hungary, and Poland, as well as the Boy Scouts of America. And certainly, the KPS strove to maintain cordial relations with the two Ukrainian churches—Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox—as well as other major community organizations.

## *Press and information*

Given the widely dispersed Plast branches and other groups in the USA, it was essential for the KPS to maintain effective communication with them. This was done first and foremost by publishing and distributing about 600 copies of the *Plastovyi lystok*, a 20–40-page bulletin that was sent to Plast members about eight times per year. It provided detailed information about planned and completed activities, the size and status of individual city branches, schedules and staffing of camps, graduates of leadership training courses, lists of promotions in rank, and a variety of other matters. Every two years, the *Plastovyi lystok* published a full report on the work completed by the KPS during its term in office, as well as a statistical and analytical overview of the status of the organization.

Other means of informing members, and the community as a whole, about Plast activities included occasional columns in the major

Ukrainian-language newspapers, such as “Vatra” in *Svoboda* and “SKOB” in *Ameryka*. An important direct resource was the publication of about 800 copies of the junior scout magazine *Hotuis!*, 900 copies of the boy and girl scouts’ magazine *Yunak*, and several hundred copies of *Plastovyi shliakh* that were earmarked for distribution in the USA and published by the HPB.

### *Administrative developments and challenges*

The US KPS was responsible to the biennial general meetings for implementing the resolutions directing the general and specific activities of the organization. To carry out these numerous functions during the 1960s and 1970s, the KPS had a modest budget of \$20–30,000, with the revenues garnered primarily from membership dues.

In 1960–70, the great majority of KPS members was based in New York and its boroughs. Most importantly, there was a large number of people able to take on the demanding duties involved. In particular, two outstanding individuals provided committed, effective, and intelligent leadership throughout the 1960s: Olha Kuzmowycz and Yuri Ferencevych.

In 1971–75, the US KPS president was Pavlo Dorozhynsky. At a time when both the Ukrainian diaspora and American society in general were undergoing rapid and radical changes, he skirted the mounting problems and focused on maintaining the status quo. During Dorozhynsky’s tenure, it became evident that a generational change was occurring in the KPS. The number of older, European-born members was declining, while the number of those who commenced their scouting careers in the USA was increasing. In fact, in 1975 Dorozhynsky reported that eight members of the KPS were US-raised rover-rank scouts and four were young scout-seniors. Fortunately, during these years the KPS presidents benefited greatly from a staff of experienced, industrious, and committed members, especially K. Nawrocky, L. Romankiw, A. Milianych, S. Rubel, I. Isajiw, and I. Nynka.



*Olha Kuzmowycz, writer and editor of the Plast publications Yunak and Plastovyi shliakh and the newspaper Svoboda, New Jersey, 1993. “Olka” was an influential leader in Plast, holding prominent positions at national and international levels.*

In the 1960s–70s, two troubling waves of change came about: one was brought on by developments within the Ukrainian community, and the other by radical and dramatic alterations that occurred during the Vietnam era in the values and mentality of American society as a whole.

Following their immigration to America, after 15–20 years the former Ukrainian DPs largely were discontinuing much of their extensive organizational work. Still, a period of stabilization continued in the 1960s–70s, characterized by widespread activity that reflected a dynamic, well-established community. No longer did the newcomers and their children feel that they lived in a strange, new environment—especially the youth, who felt at home in American conditions and with the American way of life. Educated in American schools, they launched their careers on par with other Americans and quickly entered the ranks of the middle class. No longer insecure immigrants, they were now confident “ethnics,” who were still committed to preserving their Ukrainian heritage but no longer had felt constrained to isolate themselves from American society.

With these changes came others—much more threatening to Ukrainian communities in general, and to Plast in particular. One such change was socioeconomic in nature. As Ukrainians prospered, they sought better housing, and overwhelmingly this meant leaving the tightly-knit inner city Ukrainian “ghettos” for the appealing but distant suburbs. This tendency was strengthened by a widespread American phenomenon: deterioration of the inner cities and “white flight” to the suburbs. For the Plast city branches, this meant that their members became increasingly dispersed and the organization of Plast activities became much more difficult. Furthermore, many Ukrainian families moved to distant cities in order to take advantage of better career and employment opportunities. Demographic changes also worked to Plast’s disadvantage. In sharp contrast to the baby-boom that had occurred in the German DP camps, upwardly mobile Ukrainians began to have fewer children. Obviously, this was a disquieting development for a youth organization.

In addition to these difficulties, Plast had to deal with the significant groundswell of dissent, rebellion, and anti-establishment attitudes that characterized much of America’s youth during the Vietnam era. For an organization that stressed traditional values, discipline, and orderliness, the growing predilection for “alternative lifestyles,” accompanied by narcotics, unconventional dress, and hedonism, could not but pose a major problem. Concurrently, the intense idealism and Ukrainian patriotism that characterized Plast activism in the 1940s and 1950s began to fade. Consequently, even as Plast continued to grow as an organization, the range of problems it had to contend with also multiplied.



## City branches

As a result of sociological changes occurring in the Ukrainian community, Plast city branches began to face increasing problems. By 1968, the rapid growth of previous years had declined; in that year, half of the branches lost members, while the other half gained more members. Moreover, the branch leaders began to show signs of aging. Members of the older, European-born and raised generation, those who had in many cases established the city branches, found themselves repeatedly re-elected to leadership positions because younger replacements could not be found. Tired from their years of continuous service, the older leaders often resorted to repetitive routine in their organization of city branch activities, which resulted in a marked decline in the dynamism of the organization. However, the US KPS, somewhat rejuvenated, continued its functions, and give moral support to declining city branches. Despite the “white flight” from the inner cities and the declining birth rates, the big branches held their own during the 1965–75 period, at least in terms of membership. Meanwhile, although it was often suggested, no one followed through on developing programming specifically suited for the small branches.

In addition to scouting and other activities within the organization, the branches also participated in community and religious events, which often cost a great deal of time and effort. Indeed, some American-born members complained about the “cult of *panakhydy* (funeral services)” that figured prominently in the Plast program. By the 1970s, however, although events and holidays of national significance continued to be marked, there was somewhat less focus on historically and politically important dates than in the more strongly nationalistic 1950s.

## Divisions

### *Junior scout division (UPN)*

Usually, the junior division was the best-organized, well-led, and effective in Plast. It encompassed an age group that was amenable to leadership and guidance. Moreover, in its *Orlynyi Kruh* (Eagle’s Circle, a group of highly experienced and dedicated scout leaders), it had a body that regularly produced new programs, support materials, and policy directions. The UPN, especially the girls’ dens, also had the most scout leaders, and it could count on support and cooperation from the parents. This division’s importance to the organization was obviously that it was

where children were first attracted to Plast, and where they were prepared for the later stages of their scouting career. Consequently, the future of Plast depended greatly on the condition of its youngest division. Therefore, UPN numbers were followed carefully by the KPS.

Junior scouts	1965	1970	1975
– boys ( <i>novaky</i> )	608	496	450
– girls ( <i>novachky</i> )	598	528	458

While dispersal of Ukrainian communities and lower birth rates were the obvious reasons for these developments, some junior scout leaders raised the question of whether their programs, or Plast itself, were losing their appeal. Others blamed the new generation of parents, among whom growing materialism and self-indulgent lifestyles left less time and energy for the upbringing of children based on the scouting philosophy. Nonetheless, a concerted effort was made to counter the decline. In September–October 1973, Plast USA launched a special campaign to attract children to the UPN. Flyers targeting the parents of potential recruits were printed and distributed in Ukrainian schools. In September 1974, another information brochure was published. Also, a series of articles dealing with Plast, especially the junior scouts—written by O. Kuzmowycz, L. Onyshkevych, and O. Sonevytsky—appeared in the Ukrainian press.

In 1973 a new program, endorsed by the XI Plast Congress and called *Ptashata pry Plasti*, or Plast Fledglings, was announced. Designed and implemented by Vira Shembel, with the assistance of Arunia Starukh, it was aimed at 5–6-year-olds who had completed Ukrainian kindergarten. Introduced in about 50% of the US city branches, it had some initial success but lost focus over time. (The *ptashata* or *ptasheniata* program was subsequently successfully reintroduced in several countries).

Efforts at enlivening the UPN program were also made by the indefatigable Evstachia Hoidysh. Early in 1970, she initiated a nationwide UPN competition called *Krashche novatstvo—Krashche buduचे Plastu* (Better junior scouts mean a better future for Plast), in which dens strove to win on the basis of their knowledge of nature lore and Ukrainian topics. She also compiled a detailed program for eight weeks of junior girl scout activities, “Lastivka,” that greatly facilitated the work of scout leaders. Meanwhile, in the small Plast group in San Francisco, Oksana Sydorak experimented with creating a co-ed junior scout group in areas where they were very small in number. Later, this experiment was repeated, with varying success, in Boston, New Haven, and Bridgeport. In 1974, another nationwide competition was carried out. The best results, with 90% of the

participants gaining new merit badges, were attained by Buffalo, Cleveland, and Newark. In 1975 a mini-jamboree was held at *Vovcha Tropa* in East Chatham, NY, in which 59 junior scouts and 13 scout leaders participated.

Despite declining numbers, the junior scout division continued to function well. To a large extent this was thanks to the great efforts of experienced leaders such as E. Hoidysh, T. Kohut, N. Kulynych, N. Samokish, V. Melnyk, O. Hawryluk, and, on a local level, Y. Shegryn, O. Hrymaliak, and Y. Pryshlak. Language proficiency among the children varied, from 89% who spoke Ukrainian well to 2% who did not speak it at all.

The junior scout division's programs were implemented throughout the school year during weekly meetings that consisted of games, songs, and skill-testing. Often the junior scouts participated in Plast branch events and assemblies, the Feast of St. Nicholas being a special favorite, as well as costume dances (*kostiumivky*). All these efforts improved the situation in the junior scout division, especially among girls. New trained scout leaders, mostly American-born, took over the scout leader duties.

### *Boy and girl scout division (UPU)*

The boy and girl scouts were the core division of Plast, and the age group in which scouting and character development could most readily be practiced. By the late 1960s, this division became the largest in Plast USA. It was also the most problematic division, because its members—in addition to undergoing the stressful changes of adolescence—also reflected intensely the rapidly occurring transformations that their communities were experiencing. Moving back and forth between the American and Ukrainian environments, the adolescents of this time felt keenly that they lived in two very different worlds.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the tumultuous impact of the Vietnam era raised widespread doubts, especially among youth, about the values of established society; this could not but have a major impact on Ukrainian youth, as well. Many leading Plast activists noted that “the boy and girl scouts of today are very different from what they were 10 years ago.”<sup>3</sup> In the 1950s, they still bore the imprint of Plast's European experience, but during the Vietnam years, they mirrored, more and more, the American society in which they lived. And much of what occurred in America at this time challenged the values on which Plast was based.

The widespread attitudes of youth during the Vietnam era militated against Plast's traditional emphasis on discipline and obedience to superiors. Ever more frequently, boy and girl scouts questioned the commands and instructions addressed to them, making the work of scout leaders—

who were also affected by the times—all the more difficult. Some even raised doubts about Plast and its goals altogether. The militaristic aspect of Plast, especially the emphasis on drills that was evident in the 1950s, began to fade at this time. On the other hand, unprecedented problems emerged: more and more boy and girl scouts smoked and drank, despite Plast strictures; some boys had long, unkempt hair, a slovenly appearance, and rag-tag uniforms; and even the use of narcotics was noted in some cases.

In 1969, Olha Kuzmowycz, who at the time was spearheading scout leader training methodology, noted with concern that “the clearly accelerated development of girls today puts them far ahead of their male counterparts, especially in terms of romantic-sexual interests, and their knowledge in these areas is alarming, even more so because the extent of this knowledge is not known or even understood by their parents.”<sup>4</sup>

Plast leaders also noted that Ukrainian parents, focusing on their own pursuit of a successful career and greater affluence, had only a vague understanding of Plast and its goals. Some viewed it as an environment where a semblance of Ukrainian culture and language use (increasingly less evident at home) was still maintained. Others viewed it as fulfilling a babysitting function. And for others still, Plast’s main role was to provide their children with a circle of friends. Clearly these views of Plast differed greatly from the values on which the organization was originally based, and which its leaders still strove to maintain.

Despite the emergence of serious problems in the 1965–75 period, Plast as a whole, and its boy and girl scout division in particular, achieved and maintained its highest membership numbers ever in the USA, and it was, in fact, able to function effectively for the most part.

Scouts	1965	1970	1975
– boys ( <i>yunaky</i> )	677 (701)	802	705
– girls ( <i>yunachky</i> )	777	860	783

Unlike the junior scouts, who had the *Orlynyi Kruh*, the boy and girl scouts lacked a permanent body of experienced scout leaders who could work on improving programs. Thus, when changes were attempted, they were often sporadic and short-lived. It should be noted that such problems were more evident among the boys’ troops, while the girls’ troops tended to be more active and well-run.

As in the case of the junior scouts, the leaders of the boy and girl scout division made a concerted effort to address their problems. In 1967, it was decided to subdivide the large regional camps into two types: one for the 12–14-year-olds, which followed established pro-

**Today's scouts (1975), according to Roman Levytsky,  
us national scoutmaster for boys**

Essentially the scout of today is the same as he has always been. The scouts of today look for adventures; they enjoy being in a circle of their friends, competing in areas where they feel strong, and camping—just like their predecessors. Today, as before, scouts do not like: long speeches, poorly prepared community events, and most of all they do not like contradictions between what their leaders demand of them and examples of poor or inappropriate behaviour by these same leaders.

There are, however, some differences between the scouts of today and their predecessors: they speak Ukrainian less proficiently and they pay less attention to the admonitions and instructions of their scout leaders. More scouts smoke, fewer go to camps. Clearly, there are reasons for this. Some we can do nothing about (the social environment). Nevertheless, there are many reasons for such behaviour over which we have some control. We should control the quality of our training of scout leaders better, and we should have greater influence over how our national executive functions (1975: 80).

grams, and another for the 15–17-year-olds, which focused more on scouting and hiking activities. Moreover, following the Canadian example, troop-organized (rather than regional) camps were encouraged. Also, for the older-aged boy and girl scouts, small specialized camps were organized around sea-and-air scouting themes. Especially popular among the girls were *Stezhky Kultury* (Paths of Culture), a traveling camp introduced in 1964 that concentrated on aspects of Ukrainian and European culture. Indeed, Ukrainian culture and history were part of the overall patrol and troop programs, culminating in the yearly inter-city and inter-troop *Orlykiada* competitions. This event's popularity reached beyond the USA UPU scouts into Canada. Knowledge of Ukrainian was essential in this competition, and in general Plast strove to maintain a hard line on the language issue. Knowledge of Ukrainian was a prerequisite for membership in Plast, as was attendance in Ukrainian Saturday school (*Ridna Shkola* and *Kursy Ukraïnoznavstva*)—even though it limited the potential membership numbers in Plast.

In the early 1970s, as the impact of the destabilizing Vietnam era faded, a more optimistic note crept into Plast reports on the boy and



*Patriarch Josyf Cardinal Slipyj was enthusiastically greeted by Plast members at Vocha Troja while traveling throughout North America in 1968, after being released from the Soviet Gulag.*

girl scout division. It was pointed out that despite the unsettling changes which had occurred, Plast still had a large number of idealistic, well-motivated young people who were wholly committed to the traditional values of the organization. The argument was often heard that “if we did not have good people, we would not have survived as an organization for this long.” It appeared that if a cause was worthwhile and appealing, young people would rally around it. This was demonstrated by the involvement of numerous boys’ and girls’ troops in defense of Ukrainian dissidents in the USSR, activities that involved letter-writing campaigns and taking part in public demonstrations. Another example was the enthusiasm with which the boy and girl scouts greeted Patriarch Josyf Slipyj, recently released from the Soviet gulags, in their midst on his pastoral visit to North America in 1968.

### *Rover-rank scout division (USP)*

The Plast division that grew most rapidly in the 1960s–70s was the rover-rank scouts (18–35 years old). As more and more boy and girl scouts “graduated” or reached age 18, the number of those who went on to join the rover-rank scouts increased. As a result, a marked “aging” of Plast occurred: the ranks of the younger divisions grew smaller, while those of the older divisions increased. Not all who reached age 18 chose

to continue scouting, but about 40–50% did decide to remain in Plast as rover-rank scouts, at least for some time.

Rover-rank scouts	1965	1970	1975
– males	275	321	423
– females	365	423	545

Theoretically, this age group was well past the optimum age for scouting. However, for a variety of reasons, many desired to maintain their affiliation with Plast. For example, it is likely that such idealists remained in Plast because of their sense of loyalty to an organization that had enriched their lives, and a feeling of obligation to those who followed in their footsteps. It was primarily from their ranks that Plast drew a new generation of scout leaders—born and raised in the USA, but nevertheless still a minority within the organization.

Most of the former UPU division members who joined the USP did so because of the appeal of the fraternities and sororities. Some of them had a long history and tradition, with members scattered in different countries. In these rover-rank troops, one could maintain old friendships or strike up new ones with adult Plast members of similar backgrounds and interests. One could also continue scouting on a less structured but often more challenging and interesting level. While many of these camaraderie-minded individuals were not averse to aiding Plast in different forms, they preferred to do so sporadically and in a manner of their own choosing.

An especially important role that the rover-rank fraternities and sororities performed was to encourage and support specialized scouting, like ski camps, water sports, and hiking camps. Some of them took ownership of a continuous project; for example, the *Lisovi Chorty* organized and conducted a yearly wilderness training camp, *Lisova Shkola* (Forest School), for boy scout leaders.

Despite the fact that most rover-rank scouts remained largely or partially uninvolved, an active minority began to make increasingly important contributions to Plast. Namely, during this period, 47 female and 55 male USP members held posts in the US KPs and the city branches. Of the 63 camps held in the USA in 1967–69, 27 were commanded by rover-rank scouts. Clearly, a changing of the guard was taking place, from European-born to American-born leaders. Nevertheless, membership in the rover-rank fraternities and sororities varied greatly, depending on the popularity of the camps they ran in a given year, the types of specialized scouting they focused on, and their reputation and traditions.

### *Scout-seniors division (UPS)*

As ever more rover-rank scouts reached the age of 35, they had the option of “graduating” to the scout-seniors division; consequently, this oldest age group also grew in size. During this period, about 80% of all the scout-seniors worldwide were concentrated in the USA. They were the carriers of Plast principles and ideology, originating in Galicia and to a great degree refined and applied in the USA. They had a great impact on various Plast activities in the early immigrant stages, but gradually lessened with time. It cannot be overstated that in their ranks were strong and idealistic individuals who had carried the Plast torch through various stages of its existence and sowed its seeds in the USA. The scout-seniors were the leading force in Plast, and ultimately their very existence made Plast unique, since other scouting organizations did not have adult divisions.

Scout-seniors	1965	1970	1975
– male and female	520	723	805

In any case, the scout-seniors, reflecting many years of experience, maintained a fairly tight organization that was similar to that of the other divisions. Every two years they held conferences at which a national representative and executive committee were elected. They maintained a detailed register of their membership, noting who was actually active in Plast and who was not; those UPS members who were not involved in Plast were expected to be participating instead in community work.

## **Camping**

One of the most important posts in the US KTK was the head of the КТК. This individual and his or her committee had the prime responsibility for organizing, monitoring, and evaluating all Plast camping activity in the United States. In 1969, Ireneus Isajiw, who chaired the US КТК throughout the 1960s, elaborated in detail the three aspects of his activity:

1. Training aspect;
2. Organizational aspect;
3. Technical aspect.

The КТК worked closely with regional camping committees (ОТК), which were responsible for maintenance and administration of the permanent camp facilities in a given area. For example, the ОТК for Vo-



*vcha Tropa* included a representative from New York and, to a lesser extent, Philadelphia; the ОТК for *Novyi Sokil* had representatives from Buffalo, Rochester, and Cleveland; and representatives from Hartford and New Haven formed the ОТК for the *Bobrivka* site. Some of the ОТК were identified with a single city branch, as was the case with *Pysanyi Kamin* (Cleveland), *Zelenyi Yar* (Detroit), and *Berkut* (Chicago). Moreover, each city branch had a camping coordinator who was responsible for making local arrangements.

In 1964, Julian Kryzhaniwsky compiled a detailed 95-page manual, with directions for the organization and leadership of Plast camps, intended to assist with organizational efforts. A general meeting of all camp directors was usually held in late June. In July and August, camps in progress were inspected by the national committee or its representatives. In October, the completed camps were evaluated on the basis of detailed reports submitted by the camp directors. At this time, the national committee held meetings with the ОТК to discuss changes or facility improvements. On occasion (such as in 1969, 1970, and 1971 in New York), seminars were held to provide camp directors the opportunity to discuss their experiences and offer recommendations.

As a rule, Plast in the USA organized three types of scouting camps: the large regional (*oblasni*) camps, specialized camps, and training camps.

### *Regional camps*

The large regional camps were held annually at sites or facilities owned by Plast. The largest of these was the 350-acre *Vovcha Tropa* at East Chatham in upstate New York; during a six-week season (three weeks each for boys and girls) between 450 and 550 Plast campers from city branches in the region would participate. *Novyi Sokil* (near Buffalo, NY) usually had about 200 participants per season, but this number declined after Cleveland acquired its own camp facilities. Chicago's campgrounds in Westfield, WI, attracted an average of 180–220 participants each summer, almost exclusively from that Plast branch. At *Pysanyi Kamin* near Cleveland, the seasonal number was 100–120, while Detroit's *Zelenyi Yar* varied widely, from 70 to 160. Los Angeles rented various campgrounds for its approximately 40 campers, and for several years Denver also rented facilities for about 30 campers. About 60% of the summer campers were UPU boy and girl scouts, while 40% were UPN junior scouts. In sum, the camping experience of the vast majority of Plast members in the USA took place in the abovementioned large regional camps.

Regional camp attendance	1965	1970	1975
– participant youth	1,436	1,631	1,363
– scout leader staff	236	255	284
– management	29	35	38

During the camping season, sports were a significant part of the camp activity. The US KPS realized the importance of physical activity, and even increased its emphasis on sports, adding the new position of physical fitness coordinator was to its executive roster.

### *Specialized camps*

By the time they were aged 15–17, most of the boy and girl scouts found the programs at the regional camps—which they would have been attending for several years in a row—to be uninteresting. In response, Plast in general, and the КТК in particular, began to encourage the organization of small-scale specialized camps, which focused on learning and practicing specific skills such as hiking, canoeing and sailing, bicycling, flying, mountain climbing, and skiing. While such camps had existed earlier, greater emphasis was placed on them in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Among these specialized Plast camps, there were some particularly notable successes. For example, the ski camps organized by the *Burlaky* fraternity often attracted over 100 participants, thanks to the popularity of the sport. The culturally oriented *Stezhky Kultury* camps, held every two years, were also well-attended, especially by girl scouts. In 1967, the Detroit city branch organized a well-attended sports camp at its camping site.

#### **Life in camp**

Life in camp—so very different from what the youth are involved in during the school year—includes daily assemblies and prayers together with the counselors and camp command, campfires, singing sessions, competitions, hikes...all this very quickly transforms the youth. The fact that their elders also participate in these activities awakens respect for older people, something that our Ukrainian youth is quickly losing in the general American milieu... Very often the parents criticize our Plast scout leaders unjustly. Truly, these people deserve our respect, for without them our youth would grow up on the street or in front of the TV, and their only basic reading would be comic books.

A variation of the specialized camps were summer camps organized individually by Plast branches for their UPU boy and girl scout troops. These did not necessarily emphasize particular skills, but rather sought to integrate the patrols within each troop into a more cohesive unit by means of mutually shared experience. (Such camps were the rule rather than the exception for the Plast troops throughout Canada.)

### *Training camps*

The third type of camp was intended to train scout leaders for Plast, particularly those who were to serve as counselors at the summer camps. These training camps, called *kadry vykhovnykiv* (counselor cadres), were usually one week in duration and focused on both theoretical and practical aspects of den, patrol, and camp leadership. Particularly the UPN scout division held numerous such camps (nearly 40 by 1970), often led by Nadia Kulynycz or Orest Hawryluk. Until the mid-1960s, similar (but less frequent or numerous) training camps were held for UPU scout leaders.

The concept and planning of the *Lisova Shkola* boy scout leader training camp, held on private grounds near Hunter, NY, was the work of Julian Kryzhaniwsky. The camp itself was commanded by Petro Sodal, a retired US Army officer who had decades of outstanding experi-



*Lisova Shkola is a high-level Forest School leadership training camp for male scouts.*

ence in leading boy scout camps, and who was known for his strict but fair leadership. The legendary L-SH usually attracted about 30 older boy scouts and younger rover-rank scout leaders-in-training from all over the US (and eastern Canada). They were supervised by about eight highly experienced older rover-rank scouts and scout-seniors. The permanent sponsors of this important training component of Plast USA's activity were the *Lisovi Chorty* fraternity. The organization of a similar training camp for girl scout leaders, called *Shkola Bulavnykh*, came somewhat later, in 1965. Initially led by the sorority *Ti, shcho hrebli rvut* and taken over in 1968 by the *Pershi Stezhi*, the SH-B was similar to its male counterpart in program, form, and numbers. While the US KPS continued to hold their own training courses for both junior and boy and girl scout leaders, the *LSh* and *ShB* played a key role in training Plast summer camp staff. Notably, although they took place in the USA, these two popular specialized leadership training camps were run out of the HPB and fielded participants from other countries where Plast existed, especially Canada.

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Every year, Plast in the USA conducted 28–32 camps of various types. This involved, on average, about 30 camp directors and 250 counselors, who were responsible for 1,400–1,600 campers. Obviously, such undertakings faced many obstacles. As mentioned above, tensions often developed between the national and regional camp committees regarding scheduling, fees, registration procedures, and staffing. While the КТК national committee insisted on adherence to Plast principles, adequate standards, and uniformity, the ОТК regional committees had to deal with the practical problems of paying for the maintenance and improvement of the camps, which often forced them to cut corners.

The КТК was constantly concerned about sanitary conditions at some of the camps, and about the need for systematic facility improvement plans. Another sensitive issue was the payment of salaries to camp staff. In principle, Plast was an organization in which leaders, scout leaders, and activists worked on a volunteer, no-pay basis. However, the ОТК were responsible for finding staff for the camps at their facilities, and often had to resort to offering payment to camp directors, counselors, and other workers in order to attract college-age scout leaders for the summer camps. Thus, under pressure from the regional camp committees, Plast in the USA had to make a hotly debated exception in the case of camp directors and counselors by providing them with a minimal remuneration.

## Scout leader training

The scout leaders in Plast—qualified rover-rank and scout-senior members who headed the junior division's dens and packs as well as the boy and girl scouts' patrols and troops—were central to its fundamental activity as a youth scouting organization. The *vykhovnyky* (scout leaders) were supposed to serve as models of Plast values in action; they were expected to transmit these values from one generation of scouts to another, as they taught their charges specific scouting skills, organized their activities, and supervised their behavior. Of course, some fulfilled these roles more effectively, some less effectively. But for every junior scout or boy or girl scout, their *vykhovnyk* was in many ways their most immediate and concrete representation of Plast itself. It is understandable, therefore, that the Plast administration—as exercised by the national executive—placed great emphasis on the training of its scout leaders.

The scout leader training coordinator's position in the US KPS was charged with fulfilling three main functions: (1) organizing, and often leading, the training courses for scout leaders of all ranks and divisions; (2) maintaining a register of qualified scout leaders and relevant correspondence; and (3) maintaining contact with active scout leaders and supplying them with supporting materials. The post was exceedingly demanding, and it was often difficult to find individuals willing to accept it. Some managed to create a support staff with division representatives, while others had to carry the entire burden alone. In general, the efforts of Plast scout leaders were appreciated.<sup>5</sup>

As for supplementary materials and publications, in time it became evident that Plast scout leaders wanted such materials to address broader issues than merely those dealing with the organization of activities. Ever more frequently, the discussions focused on ideological issues such as the goals of Plast in the USA, the nature of the new generation of Ukrainian youth, and the relationship between individual and organizational values.

In response to the resolutions of the 7th National Plast Assembly, a Research Center for Plast-related Issues, led by Mykola Olenych, was established. Although plans were laid for the long-term development of training programs for scout leaders, it soon became evident that because the national executive changed every two years, turning them into reality was a much more difficult undertaking. However, despite the difficulties and problems, the main goal of the training programs was achieved: Plast succeeded in training a new generation of scout leaders.

## Press and information services

In order to keep its membership well informed, emphasize its positive role and image in Ukrainian society, and attract new members, the US KPS was aware of the need to publicize the organization's activities in the Ukrainian press, which in the 1960s–70s was still extensive and vibrant. A position of press secretary was created in the KPS, but it was difficult to find someone to fill it. The problem was not only that such an individual was expected to generate a steady stream of articles about Plast, but also that the pool of those capable of undertaking such a task was constantly growing smaller. Given its operational language and commitment to preserving Ukrainian culture, the Plast leadership insisted that any literature it produced had to be written in Ukrainian. Since the number of young people available for such work became ever more limited, members of the older generation, also shrinking in numbers, were shouldered with the burden.

At this time, there were still enough people to do such work. In 1967, a press working-group was formed in the US KPS, headed by O. Juzeniw and largely dependent on the efforts of A. Milianych; its output was enhanced by Olha Kuzmowycz's numerous articles about Plast.



*Lesia Chraplywa-Schur, children's author, teacher, and editor of Hotuis! (1953–70), the Plast junior scouts' magazine. She organized the Lisovi Mavky sorority and was a USA national scoutmaster for junior scouts.*

The primary platform for this publication activity was *Vatra*, a page devoted to Plast that appeared 6–8 times a year in *Svoboda*, the largest Ukrainian-language daily in the diaspora. Edited by Uliana Starosolska-Liubovych, the supplement reported on various aspects of Plast activity. The considerable extent of this coverage is evident from the fact that in 1975–78 it encompassed 290 separate articles. A similar Plast page, titled *SKOB*, was edited by O. Lutsky and appeared in the daily *Ameryka*. Lutsky, who followed Milianych as KPS Press Secretary, also edited the bulletin of the *Plast-pryiat* Parents' Auxiliary. Thanks to the efforts of a member of the younger generation, Romana Sochan-Hadzewycz, English-language articles about Plast appeared in the *Ukrainian Weekly*.

As noted above, the most authoritative source of information about Plast in the

USA was the bulletin *Plastovyi lystok*, prepared and distributed by the KPS and its secretariat in New York. Appearing 6–8 times a year in a run of 600–700 copies, its content usually consisted of detailed reports by KPS members, information about camping and training activities, the status of Plast units, and plans for future events. Each of the Plast divisions had their own publication, as well. The UPS issued the somewhat irregular *Seniorska vatra* and *Slovo*, and the USP issued the even more irregular *Do vysot*.

Publications aimed at the UPU (*Yunak*) and UPN (*Hotuis!*) were well-edited, appealing, and regular. *Yunak*, edited by Larissa Onyshkevych in the USA and published in Toronto for worldwide distribution (in six countries where Plast operated), had about 1,000 subscribers in the USA, and occasionally featured the winners of article-writing competitions. *Hotuis!* appeared monthly in about 1,600 copies, and its longtime editor was junior scout leader and activist Lesia Chraplywa. In 1971 the publication of *Hotuis!* also moved from New York to Toronto. In addition, *Plastovyi shliakh* in 1972 had 989 subscribers worldwide—544 in the USA, 272 in Canada, and 89 in Australia.

## Archives

Since scouting was an activity that lent itself readily to filming and photography, there was considerable activity in this area. As was so often the case with other aspects of Plast activity, almost all of it hinged on the enthusiastic effort of a single individual—in this case, M. Pezhansky. Having been a scout from his youth in Eastern Galicia, Pezhansky made a concerted effort to document Plast activity in photographs and film. He created a subdivision in the US KPS that collected films and photos from Plast's past. Its archive included: a lengthy black-and-white film from the first Plast jamboree in Germany in 1947, an unedited film of the 1957 jamboree held in Canada, a color film of the 1962 Jamboree at *Vovcha Tropa* (edited by Roman Sawycky), a film of the Plast jamboree in 1967 in Canada (made by Y. Kulynycz), and footage of Patriarch Josyf Slipyj's visit to the Plast camp at *Vovcha Tropa* in 1968. All films and photos (about 1,500) were documented and stored at the KPS offices in New York. Other Plast memorabilia were stored in the Plast Museum in Cleveland, established in 1952 through the efforts one scout-senior, Leonid Bachynsky. The Plast Museum continued to gather documents, correspondence, standards, uniforms, medals, postage stamps, and photographs. By 1969 it had about 4,000 accessioned items in its collection.

## Parents' auxiliary (*Plast-pryiat*)

From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s the *Plast-pryiat* parents' auxiliaries reached the zenith of their activity in the USA. The existence of such groups was something new in Plast, as they did not exist when the organization was founded in the 1920s–30s in Eastern Galicia, nor could they be formed in the German DP camps because of the political and socioeconomic instability of the times. However, the secure, well-ordered conditions in the USA and other countries allowed parents and supporters to donate to Plast in a systematic, organized manner. Starting in the early 1950s, the parents' auxiliaries in the city branches mobilized concrete material aid for the scouting organization.

As the *Plast-pryiat* grew in size and effectiveness in the 1960s, the groups became more organized. Charters were formulated in 1951, and updated in 1962 and 1969. Each branch auxiliary's board formulated a work-plan for the coming year; members paid dues, ranging \$3–\$10 a year, with larger groups garnering annual budgets from \$3,000 to \$5,000; twice a year, their activity reports were sent to the KPS, which included a representative of the combined *Plast-pryiat* auxiliaries on the executive.

Thus, parents of Plast members had a voice in the highest decision-making body in American Plast. By 1970, each US city branch had a *Plast-pryiat* group. Among the more active members of this support organization were Roman Baransky, Bohdan Sobolta, Petro Darmohraj, Nina Illnytsky, and Antin Tymkevych.



*Yuriy Starosolsky was sworn in as Chief Scout at the Plast International Jamboree in August 1972.*

### Noteworthy events

*60th Anniversary UMPZ and new Chief Scout*

The major event of this period was celebrating the 60th Anniversary of Plast. The US KPS hosted a UMPZ, which took place, as a decade earlier, at the *Vovcha Tropa* camp, on 19–27 August 1972.



Zenon Korchynsky headed the organizing committee and Ihor Korol was the jamboree director.

Participating in the jamboree were 663 girl scouts and 527 boy scouts, 335 male and 240 female rover-rank scouts, 104 junior scouts, and 346 scout-seniors, totaling 2,215. Besides a large contingent from Canada, there were *plastuny* from Argentina, Australia (an impressive delegation numbering 32), Germany, Britain, and Italy. In addition there were 1,605 *Plast-pryiat* members and registered guests, including a group of Polish scouts. The highlight of the jamboree was the swearing in of Yuriy Starosolsky as Chief Scout, a position that had been vacant since the passing of Severyn Levytsky in 1962. Among the distinguished guests were the the Ukrainian Orthodox Metropolitan Mstyslav Skrypnyk, the Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop Vasyl Velychkovsky (recently released from the Soviet gulag), and the local hierarch, Bishop Basil Losten.

The Plast international jamborees provide an opportunity for Plast leaders from different countries to communicate in person, exchange views, and resolve mutual problems. This jamboree was no exception.

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In the 1970s, Plast in the USA reached the peak of its organization and activity. It had a strong national executive and about 30 well-organized city branches, with a total membership of about 4,000. The summer camps, more differentiated than previously, were numerous and well-run. During the year, the weekly Plast program was varied, highly patriotic, and Ukraine-oriented. Moreover, a new generation of activists, although not very numerous, was emerging to help the European-born cadres in leading the organization. Overall, Plast had grown into a strong and promising organization, one that had adapted well to the new American environment.

Notes:

1. *Plastovyi lystok* 106 (1967), no. 2, p. 4–5
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Plastovyi lystok* 114 (1969), no. 2, p. 11
4. Kuz'movych [Kuzmowycz], Ol'ha. 1969. *Plastovyi lystok* 114 (1969), no. 2, p. 11
5. Luzhnyts'kyi, O. [...], *Ameryka*, 7 September 1965

## Chapter 11

# Plast in the USA, 1976–2000

The late 1970s marked the beginning of another distinct period in the history of Plast in the USA. It was quite different from preceding times such as the 1940s, which saw the scouting organization's vibrant rebirth in the German DP camps, or the 1950s–60s, when Plast successfully transplanted itself in the New World, increasing its membership and organizational structure in the process. In contrast, a period of stagnation set in beginning in the late 1970s. Viewed in terms of American immigration history, these decreases in size and dynamism were not unexpected. Most ethnic organizations experienced decline and disintegration after a generation or two in the USA. This was usually accompanied and accelerated by the dispersal of the formerly tight-knit inner-city ethnic communities, with massive, widely scattered migration to the suburbs—a process which the Ukrainian DPs experienced in full measure.

Clearly, such developments posed an ever-greater challenge to conducting regular Plast activities and maintaining its organizational framework. Moreover, as the founding generation of extremely idealistic, patriotic, and committed activists passed on, it became increasingly difficult to find replacements among the American-bred Ukrainians, who were quickly adopting the self-oriented, materialistic values, and lifestyle of American “yuppie” culture.

Plast's decline was not only due to changes in the Ukrainian community. In a rapidly evolving world that offered young people ever-greater varieties of ways to spend their time, scouting generally lost its appeal to much of the youth overall in American society. Thus, numbers of scouts, especially in North America, dropped precipitously. Indeed, in the USA as a whole, the numerical decline in American scouts, which occurred in the latter part of the 20th century, was greater than that in Plast.

Yet despite the threatening obstacles that emerged, Plast survived, though diminished in size and scope of activity. Indeed, compared to many Ukrainian-American organizations that were increasingly moribund or disintegrating in the final decades of the 20th century, Plast exhibited a surprising resilience. Its emphasis on constantly training young leaders meant that activists could still be found in its ranks.

The emergence of an independent Ukraine in 1991 boosted the morale of Plast members, provided them with a sense of fulfillment, and created possibilities for cooperation with the re-emergent Plast in Ukraine. As the 20th century came to an end, it was evident that Plast's central tenets—universal scouting values and methods, as well as preservation of Ukrainian national identity—still appealed to significant numbers of young Ukrainian-Americans.

\* \* \*

## **National Plast Executive (KPS)**

During the 1975–2000 period, the US KPS strove to carry out its traditional functions: maintaining organizational unity and uniformity, supervising and evaluating the functioning of Plast city branches, developing annual work-plans and themes, organizing camps, scout leader training courses and special events, and representing the US organization within the community and in its contacts with the international Plast. In sharp contrast to previous periods, these demanding functions—it must be stressed again that all Plast activists were volunteers—had to be carried out during a time of growing problems, organizational shrinkage, and spreading apathy. Not only did KPS have to deal with increasing difficulties, in terms of its effectiveness and composition, it often reflected them.

For almost this entire period, the US KPS continued to be based in a three-room office in the New York Plast headquarters on Second Avenue, and most of its members were drawn from the surrounding area. The US KPS continued performing its functions as before. However there was some legitimate dissatisfaction expressed by the local branches, accusing the KPS of overemphasizing “bureaucratic” details instead of actually encouraging scouting activity at the local level. To remedy the situation, yearly meetings were established between the city branches and the KPS to maintain open channels and productive relations.

However, there were other challenges to contend with: growing apathy among Plast activists, problems finding candidates for leadership positions, and changing attitudes of parents towards Plast and its objectives—hence, declining numbers in the junior and boy and girl scout divisions. At this point the difficulties did not appear to be overly threatening, and the US KPS continued to function in its established mode. Among the varied new activities were regional Spring Fests, with different Ukrainian historical themes, celebration of the centenary of Ukrain-

ian settlement in the USA in Washington, DC, with a first official visit to the White House, and demonstrating in defence of political dissidents in Soviet Ukraine, as well as commemorations of the 25th anniversary of Plast in the USA, the largest one occurring in New York city.

On 24–27 October 1976, New York city hosted a conference of national executives from Plast organizations in Australia, Britain, West Germany, Argentina, and Canada. The issues discussed included changes to organizational regulations, the status of various divisions, and Plast publications.

A high point of the US KPS's organizational activity in summer 1978 was the participation of 180 boy and girl scouts from the USA in the Plast Jamboree held in the distant Rocky Mountains of Canada. The daunting and complex logistical aspects of the US delegation's participation in the jamboree were largely dealt with by the KPS's Internal Affairs Manager (head of the organizational sector), Volodymyr Svyntukh.

On 3 January 1979, the US KPS, and Plast overall, suffered a painful loss with the death, at a relatively young age, of the respected KPS president, Andrij Mycio. During his brief illness, his duties were taken on by Natalia Koropeckyj, head of training. On 16 January 1979, Ihor Sochan was elected by the KPS plenum as the new KPS president.

At the 14th US Plast Conference at Soyuzivka, Evstachia Hoidysh was elected head of KPS for the 1979–81 period; she would be elected to this post two more times, serving until 1985. Based in New York, Hoidysh was a long-time Plast activist who specialized in working with junior scouts. Although a long-standing member of Plast, she was willing to accept change when it was deemed necessary. From the outset, Hoidysh stressed that the attention of KPS should be on supporting scouting activity at the local level. To this end, she made it a point to visit, at her own cost, almost every Plast branch in the USA, in order to better understand the problems that existed at the local level. Hoidysh often argued that the role of the KPS should be kept to a minimum, even concluding that the size of the national executive should be reduced.

Hoidysh kept with tradition, however, in viewing Plast as a key and unique component of the Ukrainian diaspora community. Its value lay in its commitment to general scouting values, combined with the



*The us Plast delegation at the New York 1976 world leadership conference, from right: Andrij Mycio, Slava Rubel, Lubomyr Romankiw, Olha Kuzmowycz, and Luba Krupa.*

preservation of Ukrainian patriotism and cultural heritage. In the Ukrainian community, Plast was unique, because it stood above political or religious alignments. Hoidysh and her colleagues believed that in order to preserve the character of Plast, it would have to continue to insist (despite the increasing number of mixed marriages in the diaspora) on the use of Ukrainian and on the cultivation of Ukrainian national awareness, including commemoration of Ukrainian national celebrations and heroes. Consequently, a favourite project supported by the US KPS during this period was mobilizing financial support for the English-language *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* project (ed. Volodymyr Kubijovyč). Hoidysh also reiterated that in spite of the general spread among American youth of anti-establishment attitudes that prevailed in the late 1960s, there was a need to return to traditional Plast values, notably discipline. In view of the assimilatory pressures that were growing in Ukrainian-American society, many would find these traditionalist attitudes difficult to maintain.

The fact that Hoidysh served three terms as KPS president was a reflection, on the one hand, of her great commitment to Plast, and on the other hand, of the increasing difficulty in finding volunteers who would shoulder the responsibilities of leadership in the organization. At the branch level, many members of the “old guard” of activists, those who had often carried the burdens of local leadership for decades, were passing away. Their replacements, necessarily sought among career-oriented and time-constrained young professionals, were exceedingly difficult to find. As a result, leadership posts at the local level were often reduced to a minimum, and some activities were curtailed. For example, such traditional events as commemorations of the Battle of Kruty or the birth of Taras Shevchenko disappeared from the Plast calendar of events at this time.

In the years 1977–79, contacts with other scouting organizations were especially active. In 1978, the US KPS cooperated with the Boy Scouts of America and the scouting movements of other East European nations in forming a consultative committee. A jamboree of East European scouts called “Unity” (*Yednist*), consisting of Ukrainians, Poles, Hungarians, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, was planned to be held at *Vovcha Tropa* on 25 August–3 September 1978. Another innovation was Plast’s initiative to invite members of other Ukrainian youth organizations to participate in its specialized camps; however, the response was minimal. Given the various activities of the US KPS, it is surprising that they were carried out in the late 1970s–early 1980s with an annual budget, based primarily on membership dues, of only about \$35,000.

Much of 1981–82 was spent preparing for the 1982 international Ukrainian jamboree. An effort was made to find a site other than the traditional one at *Vovcha Tropa*, because its facilities were deemed to be inadequate. However, the decision was finally made to hold the jamboree at *Vovcha Tropa* on the condition that its facilities were improved; carrying out this work took up much of the KPS's time and energy. On 17 September 1981, Andrew Lastowecky of New York was confirmed by the US KPS as head of the jamboree's organizational committee. The highly experienced and respected Petro Sodol and Maria Motyl of New York were appointed boys' and girls' camp directors, respectively, while Volodymyr Hnatchuk of Detroit, who had to travel frequently to New York for meetings, was to serve as overall camp director of the jamboree. KPS insisted that planning and operations of the jamboree should involve all Plast divisions, and with great satisfaction the organizational committee learned that at a meeting held on 26 September 1981 in New York, all the rover-rank scout and scout-seniors units pledged their support for this effort.

During Hoidysh's third term, the US KPS suffered a major setback, when a fire swept through its 3-room offices in the Plast headquarters in New York on 23 October 1984, causing severe disruption of its work and wreaking havoc in its records and archives. For the next several years, the KPS would have to meet in a single room that the New York branch set aside for their use in its headquarters.

Despite her efforts, Hoidysh had to admit in her 1985 report that she had had little success in achieving the goals set out for the US KPS. Membership continued to decline, but even more worrisome was the widespread apathy, reluctance to take on responsibilities, and lack of commitment that she encountered among many Plast leaders and members. The fact that such attitudes were present to an even greater degree in other Ukrainian organizations was of little comfort. These attitudes were all the more depressing because Hoidysh, like others in the rapidly diminishing "Old Guard," continued to believe that Plast was a unique and very worthwhile organization: "Plast is a highly idealistic, highly patriotic organization, which is unique in that it stands above political and religious differences and knows how to foster youth and how to function under a single authority" (1985, p. 16).<sup>1</sup>

Despite the continuing decline of US Plast membership in the USA—in 1989 it dropped to 2,967, about 25% less than in 1960—the morale of the KPS rose somewhat during the 1985–9 period, when it was headed by Ihor Sochan. To a large extent, this was thanks to the radical rejuvenation of the national executive, which by 1987 consisted almost

completely of US-born members. It included such promising activists as Khrystyna Santore, Oles Labunka, Olia Stasiuk, Andrey Hankevych, Askold Vynnykiv, and Boryslav Bilash (a Winnipeger), all of whom were still rover-rank scouts. Even the scout-seniors in KPS such as Andrij Bihun, Yuri Popel, and Nila Pavliuk had done all of their scouting in the USA. As Sochan noted, the executive established a good internal working relationship, and all of its members took their duties seriously.

In 1987, a young but experienced Plast member in New York, Olia Stasiuk, took over the copious duties of the Secretary; she was aided by Lida Chernyk. Not only was the national Plast office revitalized by the addition of new people, it was also modernized by the acquisition of a computer. This greatly helped in dealing with a perennial problem—the collection of Plast membership dues. Plast continued to take an active part in Ukrainian community affairs. In 1988, much attention was focused on celebrating the Millennium of Christianization of Ukraine. About 500 uniformed Plast members participated in the demonstration by Ukrainians in Washington, and a large group of US Plast members also attended similar events in Rome. In July 1988, the US KPS president Sochan visited the White House to participate in signing the Captive Nations Resolution, and in December of that year he was at the White House again, to deliver to members of President Reagan's staff a memorandum in support of political prisoners in Ukraine.

On 15 October 1989, the 19th KPZ elected Olha Kuzmowycz of New York as president of the KPS, a post she had successfully held about 20 years earlier, when the organization was at its high point. This was clearly a sign of respect and confidence, especially by the younger generation, in a person who had worked tirelessly in Plast for decades and who had held a variety of positions at both the national and the New York branch level. Unfortunately, it may also have been an indication that suitable candidates among the younger generation were difficult to find. In fact, by 1989 the number of positions on the US executive had shrunk to 14, and its membership was widely scattered. This might explain why Kuzmowycz insisted that the branch leaders must take an oath to support the KPS in its work.

This new executive, chaired by an experienced leader and consisting of young, energetic members (Khrystyna Santore of Philadelphia, a young rover-rank scout who had already worked on the KPS for almost a decade, was an outstanding member of this group) began its work with great enthusiasm. But it gradually diminished in view of the apathy and inactivity that was repeatedly encountered at the local level and in some members of the Executive. Only the training sector, led by Daria

Yakubovych, was effective in its work. In effect, four women—Olha Kuzmowycz, Daria Yakubovych, Olia Stasiuk, and Lida Chernyk—had to carry out the functions of what was once a 30-member body.

During this period, the US National Plast Executive was occupied with the planning and organization of the Jubilee (10-year) International Plast Jamboree for 1992. For a long time it was difficult to find individuals who were willing to take on the responsibility for such a complex and large-scale event. Finally, in October 1990, Oleksander Chernyk, a long-time Plast activist and leader from Philadelphia, agreed to chair the organizational committee. Yuri Sawycky was in charge of planning, and Andrew Lastowecky managed the finances and infrastructure.

## Impact of Ukrainian independence

The work of the US KPS led by Kuzmowycz took place during historic times, coinciding with the gradual disintegration of the USSR and, on 24 August 1991, the emergence of an independent Ukraine—long the dream and goal of patriotic Ukrainians, and of Plast members in particular. Clearly such cataclysmic events could not but exert an influence on Plast. As Soviet authority crumbled and Ukrainian self-assertion grew, something that could only have been dreamed of before—the rebirth of Plast in Ukraine—became a reality.

Liaising with newly formed Plast divisions in Ukraine (in Lviv)



*The emergence of an independent Ukraine in 1991 meant the rebirth of Plast in that country. Ukrainian members began taking part in events in the US. Sitting: Orysia Kowcz, Oles Kryskiw (Ukraine); standing from right: Slava Rubel, Lusya Hryskiw, Marta Kolomayets, Teresa Ben, Marta Zielyk, Lalia Hankevych, Taisa Markus, Sofia Zielyk.*

was the responsibility of the НРВ. Nonetheless, this development presented the American KPS with a new series of challenges and responsibilities, as well. On 8 July 1990 at *Vovcha Tropa*, President Kuzmowycz organized a celebration of the renaissance of Plast in Ukraine, and in August she traveled to Lviv to meet with its representatives. Much of 1990–91 was spent collecting funds to pay for a delegation of Plast members from Ukraine and Poland to take part in scout leader training camps in the USA.



Another memorable event occurred on 27 July 1991, when Yuri Shukhevych, the son of the celebrated Roman Shukhevysh—Taras Chuprynka, commander of the UPA and a Plast activist during the 1920s—visited the Plast camp at *Vovcha Trova* and spoke of his father's deep involvement in Plast. The US KPS also spearheaded a successful funding drive for Ukrainian scouts in Ukraine and Poland, collecting \$50,636 within a matter of months. Members of Plast USA, especially scout-seniors, actively participated in aiding Plast in Ukraine by making personal visits, conducting training courses, and supplying Plast literature.

Clearly, the emergence of an independent Ukraine and the revival of Plast there helped raise the sagging morale of Plast members in the USA. Moreover, it provided an immediate reward, making knowledge of the Ukrainian language—which had been consistently promoted by Plast leaders—a tangible benefit now. Kuzmowycz was soon to conclude, however, that the longstanding emphasis on preserving Ukrainian identity and culture to a certain extent precipitated the decline of Plast activity in the USA once Ukraine became independent. She argued that many US activists probably concluded that with the rebirth of scouting in Ukraine, Plast in America, which had worked hard for forty years to preserve the values and ideals of Ukrainian scouting, could now scale back its efforts and rest on its laurels. Some activists even raised the idea of the possible discontinuation of Plast in the USA.<sup>2</sup>

Although UMPZ-92 was considered a success, it did not provide, as had been hoped, an invigorating injection of new dynamism into Plast USA ranks. Attempts to organize meetings with parents largely failed. Reporting city branches seemed to be reasonably active, but others failed to report. A temporary negative atmosphere and some resignation among the members of the KPS emerged, including its president, O. Kuzmowycz, who declared that she was discouraged because of the lack of a cohort of responsible individuals that would allow KPS to be effective. Nevertheless, the work of the KPS continued.

## **Divisions**

### *Junior scout division (UPN)*

For decades, the junior scouts had been the best-run and well-organized division in Plast. It had the most effective scout leader training programs, numerous scout leaders grouped in the *Orlynyi Kruh* management circle, abundant literature, and strong parent support. Moreover,

its work was made easier thanks to the age group, which was most receptive to guidance and instruction. However, by the early 1970s the key concern was the declining numbers of boys and girls in the junior scouts. To a large extent, the reason for this was the shrinking demographic base from which they were drawn, as new Ukrainian parents in the USA tended to have markedly smaller families.

UPN scouts	1974	1976	1977	1980	1987	1989	1991	1992	1995
– boys ( <i>novaky</i> )	510	435	385	344	278	254	217	195	–
– girls ( <i>novachky</i> )	460	456	410	302	230	236	266	179	–
– UPN total	970	891	795	646	508	490	483	374	425

Since some localities did not have enough members to form separate boys' and girls' packs, the practice of forming co-ed packs appeared in cities with smaller communities. By 1991 it was decided to consolidate representation in the national executive to a single junior scout leader, usually female, for the UPN. The first to hold this post was Sofia Zielyk.

By the early 1990s, the rapid decline in the division had stabilized as a newer generation of young parents, most of whom belonged or had belonged to Plast, began to enroll their own children in the UPN. Indeed, some parents were motivated to become pack leaders in their city branches. Meanwhile, a greater effort was made to design more interesting programs, using modern approaches. Efforts were also made to recruit children among the new arrivals from Ukraine and Poland, as well as the so-called fourth wave. Subsequently, following an 18-year decline, a 1995 review revealed a modest increase in UPN numbers.

### *Boy and girl scout division (UPU)*

The changes that increasingly confronted Plast in America were especially evident in its core division, the girl and boy scouts (ages 12–17). Just as this division strikingly demonstrated growth and dynamism in the 1950s–60s, it would also reflect the difficulties of the 1980s–90s. As Ukrainian families moved out of the original compact city-center neighbourhoods, their children were ever more influenced by American values and attitudes. Unlike the 1950s, when Ukrainian scouts still viewed themselves as “others” in America, by the 1970s they were very much at ease in and a part of American society. This meant that Ukrainian teenagers were doubly vulnerable to change, reflecting developments in both Ukrainian-American and mainstream American society.

UPU scouts	1977	1982	1987	1993	1995
– girls ( <i>yunachky</i> )	644	523	326	249	250
– boys ( <i>yunaky</i> )	739	528	376	299	281
– UPU total	1301	1051	702	548	531
Plast USA grand total	4,217	3,370	2,997	2,638	2,501

It soon became clear, however, that declining membership was only part of the problem. There were numerous indications that the gap between the attitudes and values of the current generation of teenagers and their European-born predecessors was growing ever wider. The questioning, anti-establishment attitudes that had emerged among America's teenagers in the late 1960s and become prevalent in the 1970s were obviously influencing the Plast youth, as well. Discipline, obedience to one's superiors, and adherence to Plast rules and directives declined perceptibly. Unlike the militarist strictness of the post-wwII years, a growing laxness among both the boy and girl scouts began to be frequently mentioned in Plast reports during the 1980s and 1990s. This was often reflected, moreover, in a casual or irresponsible approach to leadership, as well, and recordkeeping and reporting deteriorated. Although formal Plast activities were still conducted in Ukrainian (indicating that most understood the language), English was clearly becoming the primary means of communication among the teenagers.

The initial response of Plast leaders was to insist on traditional values, and they called for a return to stricter discipline. This response, however, proved to be futile.

A revealing insight into the views and attitudes of the Plast boy scouts was provided during the 1982 Jamboree, attended by 417 boy scouts from the USA and Canada. Petro Sodol, an experienced scoutmaster and long-time camp director of the *Lisova Shkola* scout leader camp, conducted a survey of the boys, including the following questions:

- 1) *What do you consider to be your ethnic identity?* 57% Ukrainians, 37% Ukrainian-Americans, and 6% Americans or Canadians;
- 2) *About 66% spoke Ukrainian at home and 33% did not (but in communication with their friends, English was used most often);*
- 3) *About 50% thought that the Ukrainian heritage language schools were irrelevant;*
- 4) *Reasons for belonging to Plast:* 43% because of friends,

- 24% because of the camping experience, 14% because of parents, and 7% because the weekly activities were interesting;*
- 5) About 66% approved of the scout leaders in their home branch;*
  - 6) About 66% enjoyed the camps and camping experience;*
  - 7) As for camping activities, terrain games, swimming, sports, and hikes were most popular; woodcraft, first aid, and cartography (activities which required effort) were tolerated; and drills, night sentry duty, and signaling were disliked.*
  - 8) Knowledge about Plast as an organization was weak: only 33% knew who the chief scout was or what the hpb was.*
  - 9) When asked what positions they preferred in their patrols, 30% chose patrol leader, 10% each preferred deputy leader, treasurer, and junior scout leader, and no one wanted to be minute-taker.*

Sodol concluded that about 25% of the boys should not be in Plast at all, because they had little interest in its activities. He was surprised that in spite of this, disciplinary problems among the 417 boy scouts at the 1982 jamboree were not as great as he expected. As others had done before him, Sodol concluded that the most crucial element in making a boy's Plast experience worthwhile was a good scout leader.<sup>3</sup>

In 1985 the national scout leader for girls, Christina Kowcz, conducted a survey of girl scout troops throughout the USA. Her comments as the result of this survey were not encouraging: Plast girl scouts in New York were irresponsible; in Chicago the girls (and their parents) showed little interest in Plast; Cleveland, Rochester, and Detroit had well-run, active troops; in Philadelphia interest in Plast was declining; the troop in Syracuse would have to be dissolved because its membership was too low; in Passaic and Buffalo the situation was satisfactory; the troop in Washington was active but lacked enough scout leaders; Albany lacked the necessary numbers to form a troop; and New Brunswick, NJ, was noteworthy because it had strong parent support.<sup>4</sup>



*Lubomyr Romankiw was Plast's Chief Scout from 1997 to 2016.*

It seemed that Ukrainian-American teenagers simply had too many other activities and responsibilities vying for their time and attention.

A new generation of Plast leaders—by 1980 about 80% of them had been born and bred in the USA—made numerous efforts to introduce changes that would appeal to young Ukrainian teens. Greater emphasis was placed on smaller, specialized camps, including those specifically for the higher ranks, self-run scout troop camps (*kurinni tabory*), canoe camps, woodcraft, and wilderness camps. In compiling troop activity programs for the coming year, the girl and boy scouts were given a greater say and made co-responsible for planning their activities.

Scout leaders were repeatedly reminded that they must serve as models for their charges and not give cause for disillusionment. They affirmed that in general the Plast approach to dealing with youth was effective, a modicum of discipline was necessary, and Ukrainian must remain as the primary language of communication. But they also recognized that more imagination and creativity was needed in implementing the Plast programmatic objectives.

In 1993, a Spring Fest camp was held at Plast's *Pysanyi Kamin* resort near Cleveland. About 135 boy and girl scouts attended (from Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, New York, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, Philadelphia, and Washington), representing about one-third of the scout division in the USA. The Plast leaders used the occasion to question the teenagers on Plast issues and concerns. The results of this exercise were as follows:

- 33% of the boy and girl scouts believed that Plast should remain an exclusively Ukrainian-language organization;
- 67% of the boy and girl scouts believed that Plast should be bilingual, Ukrainian and English (but they were not sure which language should dominate);
- 20% of the scouts spoke with their parents exclusively in Ukrainian;
- 70% spoke with their parents in both Ukrainian and English;
- 10% spoke with their parents primarily in English;
- 90% of their parents belonged, or had belonged, to Plast;
- 33% of the scouts liked Plast because it gave them an opportunity to experience something unique;
- 67% liked Plast because they saw their friends there;
- 33% would not change anything in the Plast program;
- 67% would prefer some modification of the uniforms and more free time during the summer camps;
- 80% of the scouts attended Plast weekly and 20% attended bi-weekly; the meetings were led in Ukrainian but scout leaders often used English in communicating with them.<sup>5</sup>

In analyzing the results of this questionnaire—which was admittedly skewed, based as it was on a pre-selected group of the most active and committed scouts—Plast leaders saw that knowledge of Ukrainian, while still widespread, was limited to a rather basic level. This had implications for the future: although current scout leaders still had a reasonably good command of Ukrainian, it was questionable how proficient in Ukrainian the new generation of scout leaders would be. Moreover, it appeared that for many parents, Plast was viewed an important means of encouraging the use of Ukrainian, albeit something that the parents themselves seemed to be unable or unwilling to do.

There were, nevertheless, reasons to be optimistic. The fact that the parents of the majority of the scouts were current or former members of Plast in the USA meant that the commitment to the organization and its values had been passed on, in a core-group, from one generation to another. In a significant number of families, there were two and even three generations of Plast members—which meant that Plast methods and values had a long-lasting quality, one with multi-generational appeal. Moreover, such families could be counted on to provide a steady, though hardly sizable, stream of members to the organization. The fact that many parents of Plast members returned to Plast activity when their children were in the organization seemed to support this conclusion, and added to the human resources that Plast had at its disposal. Finally, and most importantly, one could conclude that the continued existence of Plast was warranted and that its program still had appeal for a certain contingent of Ukrainian teenagers.

### *Rover-rank scout division (USP)*

The rover-rank scouts continued to be both a difficult and an essential division in Plast. Age 18–35 is a period of great change in individuals' lives. Often these young people are concentrating on their education, which often means leaving the place where they grew up, or establishing a family and career. It is a time when childhood friends, including fellow members of Plast, drift away, while others appear, some with no ties to Plast. The rover-rank scouts are no longer under the authority of scout leaders, and there is little in terms of a Plast program for them. For those who remained in Plast, their branch scout-seniors division was more like an informal group of friends who shared a common background, and if they were active in Plast, it was on a volunteer basis. Documentation of their status and activities was not done with due diligence. At the 19th

КРЗ, the condition of the USP was reported as follows: “This division is generally marked by apathy, a lack of clear goals, as well as doubts about the sense of continuing scouting or one’s capability of managing it. The rare examples [among the rover-rank scouts] of model scouts and scout leaders find little support among their colleagues, which only discourages and disillusiones them.”<sup>6</sup>

It must be noted, however, that this division also provided a growing majority of scout leaders for the junior and boy and girl scouts, organized and led the summer camps, and increasingly formed a part of the Plast executive leadership. They often came forward with new ideas and methods of implementing the Plast program. And last but not least, members of the USP who often married and raised children who would eventually be enrolled in Plast.

USP rover-rank scouts	1977	1980	1982
– males	468	469	422
– females	610	516	479
– USP total	1,078	985	901
<b>Plast USA grand total</b>	<b>4,216</b>	<b>3,634</b>	<b>3,370</b>

Among the individual Plast branches, 75–100 rover-rank scouts lived in each of the larger cities such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, 35–45 lived in Cleveland and Detroit, and 10–15 in Hartford, Buffalo, Rochester, Washington, and Los Angeles.

In the mid-1980s, there were 10 fraternities and 13 sororities in the USP division in the USA (membership is international).

**Fraternities:** *Chervona Kalyna* (Red Viburnum—14 members), *Lisovi Chorty* (Forest Devils—38), *Chornomortsi* (Black Sea Sailors—28), *Orden Khrestonostsiv* (Crusaders—63), *Khmelnychenky* (Sons of Khmelnytsky—55), *Pobratymy* (Blood Brothers—25), *Burlaky* (Vagabonds—24), *Siromantsi* (Greybacks—10), *Vovkulaky* (Werewolves—12), and *Chota Krylatykh* (Winged Team).

**Sororities:** *Lisovi Mavky* (Forest Nymphs—55), *Ti, shcho hreblirvut* (Those Who Tear Down Barricades—23), *Chortopolokhy* (Thistles—27), *Spartanky* (Spartan Ladies—46), *Shostokryli* (Seraphs—4), *Verkhovynky* (Alpine Lasses—4), *Pershi Stezhi* (Trailblazers—30), *Chornomorski Khyvli* (Black Sea Waves—15), *Buryverkhy* (Storm Surfers—5), *Novi Obrii* (New Horizons—18), *Kniahyni* (Princesses—9), and *Stepovi Vidmy* (Steppe Witches).



*Chornomortsi fraternity and Chornomorski Khvyli sorority are dedicated to organizing water activity and sailing camps. Vovcha Tropa camp, 2007.*

The USP rover-rank fraternities and sororities provided the most effective organizational and social structure for the adult scouts in this division. They maintained close ties with their members, and united the individuals within this age range, encouraging them to relate to each other and to benefit from the experience of older members, as well as from the energy of younger ones.

About 55% of the male and female rover-rank scouts in the USA belonged to fraternities and sororities, while the remainder were independent, affiliated with their branch-based USP division. In the late 1970s, greater efforts were made to engage all rover-rank scouts, and encourage the uncommitted ones to organize new fraternities or sororities. Another problem was that when boy and girl scouts “graduated” from their troops, they often did not register as rover-rank scouts, despite the KPS requirement to do so. Even rover-rank scout leaders were often not registered as members in their own city branch. At the US KPS level, a process initiated in 1976 and completed in 1981 resulted in the amalgamation of the two gender-based rover-rank scout divisions into a single, co-ed representation on the KPS. Only 33% of known rover-rank scouts re-registered in this new division.



	1986	1991	1993	1995
USP rover-rank scouts	817	676	616	544
Plast USA grand total	2,997	2,704	2,638	2,501

In the early 1990s, the attention of many rover-rank scouts in Plast USA was focused on events in Ukraine, and their national representative, Illia Labunka, spent a large part of his term in Ukraine. Moreover, he initiated a motion that called on rover-rank scouts to correspond directly with the new rover-rank scouts in Ukraine, and encouraged them to work for the development of Plast in Ukraine and encourage their Ukrainian counterparts to join existing USP fraternities and sororities.

### *Scout-seniors division (UPS)*

A well-organized group, the Plast scout-seniors (women and men over age 35) consistently reflected the patriotism, sense of responsibility, and discipline that the organization sought to instill in its younger members. This is the group that carried the Plast torch through the decades from the beginning, their idealism, patriotism, and leadership delivering Plast into 21st century. Scouts of the UPS rank were the Plast thinkers, planners, administrators, and youth educators—they were the leaders of Plast, individuals who had “grown up in Plast” and never stopped con-



*Gathering of one of the oldest Plast sororities, Ti, shcho hrebli rvut, Vovcha Tropa camp, 2007.*

sidering themselves as *plastuny*. The scout-seniors were the only division in Plast that continued to grow long after the younger divisions began to decline in numbers. In part, this was thanks to the fact that there was no age limit on how long one could be a member of this division.

During the 1980s, 28 of the US city branches had active UPS groups.

UPS members	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1988	1989
	836	848	880	902	889	879	882	904	925	997	1,014

The Plast scout-seniors in the US organized their own camps and activities at the jamborees. For example, at the 1982 Plast Jamboree Larissa Onyshkevych organized a series of lectures and group discussions on topics such as “The History of Plast,” “Plast in 2000,” “Future of the Ukrainian Language in Plast,” “Growth of Plast and Public Relations,” and “Leadership in Plast.”

The growing numbers of scout-seniors highlighted a peculiar problem that Plast faced: the “greying” of the organization. By the early 1990s, this meant that many members of what was a youth organization were no longer young. As mentioned above, the president of the US KPS, Olha Kuzmowycz, stressed that if this trend continued, it might be time to liquidate Plast. Fortunately, this point was not seriously considered, but the UPS remained a disproportionately large part of Plast in the USA.

A decade later, scout-senior activity was refocused under the leadership of Volodymyr Hnatkivsky. In addition to supporting Plast and preserving its traditional values, Hnatkivsky argued that the UPS should also turn its attention to events in Ukraine and, in particular, help with the rebirth of Plast there. Indeed, many scout-seniors from the USA (and Canada) played a key role in Plast’s revival in Ukraine.

## Camping

Besides providing an immersive Ukrainian-language environment, Plast camps offered an opportunity to get to know scouts from other parts of the country and develop new friendships. However, not all camp directors and scout leaders were well trained for the job, programs were not always properly carried out, and attitudes to the youth were often unprofessional, resulting in negative feedback, especially in the older scouts.

When Rakovsky completed his second term as head of КТК in 1979, he presented the US KPS with a list of views, suggestions, and recommendations. In view of the fact that the more experienced scouts preferred

specialized camps, he recommended that such camps be organized more often. He also encouraged troop camps, planned and conducted by each city's troop on their own (as regularly done by Plast troops in Canada).

Rakovsky's most innovative recommendation dealt with the camp staff. He proposed that a core group of qualified camp directors be hired (perhaps consisting primarily of teachers, for obvious reasons) that would provide high-quality camp leadership year after year. Unfortunately, financial considerations prevented the implementation of these proposals. Nevertheless, it was also emphasized that a lax attitude toward the camp counselors should not be tolerated; only those with the proper training should be accepted as camp staff members. Rakovsky was critical of camp directors who accepted untrained individuals on their camp staff, who did not submit their camp programs for verification by the КТК, and who failed to properly evaluate and report on the performance of their staff. As for the scout campers, they preferred to have more challenges than comforts in camp. In spite of some improvements, camp attendance gradually diminished. In part, this was due to the fact that mandatory attendance at summer camp was no longer strictly enforced. To remedy the problem, other forms of camping were introduced.

The concerns of the US KPS about unsatisfactory summer camping continued. On 13 November 1988, Zenia Brozyna of the КТК held a meeting in New York for Plast families, with 105 parents attending. Brozyna explained to the parents that scout camping was not merely a summertime activity but rather a continuation of what their children had been taught during the year. During their weekly activities they learned the skills in theory, while in the summer they were supposed to apply them in practice. For their part, the parents appeared to be concerned most by the lack of qualified and experienced counselors. But in view of the extremely modest remuneration of several hundred dollars per camp, many potential scout leaders concluded that Plast camps were simply not worth their while as summer employment.

US regional camp attendance	1977	1978	1985	1988	1994	1995
– campers	1,024	834	732	498	532	551
– directors and staff	239	181	206	111	142	101

While the campers and their parents wanted improvements and adjustments in the camping programs, this core group did not want radical changes. In short, it wanted Plast USA to continue camping and scouting in the Ukrainian context that it had always offered.

## Scout leader training

Scout leaders were the motor that allowed Plast to function. They fostered the younger scouts during the year, and ran the camps in the summer. At least in theory, Plast scout leaders were to serve as models of the type of individual that Ukrainian scouting sought to develop. However, a key problem was how to pass on traditional values while constantly adapting to an ever-changing environment. The effectiveness with which Plast managed to deal with this issue remained, therefore, a telling indication of its ability to survive in the USA.

It was fortunate for the organization that throughout the 1970s–90s, scout leader training was the responsibility of a small cohort of extraordinarily committed and experienced individuals (all women): Khrystyna Nawrocky, Natalia Koropecyk, Nina Samokish, and Daria Yakubovych. Their efforts allowed Plast to manage problems that could easily have been insurmountable. Until 1993, the Development (*Vykhovnyi*) Sector of KPS had overall responsibility for the training, promotion, and assignment of scout leaders and camp counselors, as well as their promotions, especially during the camping season.

The early and mid-1970s represented a high point for Plast USA in the effective training of scout leaders and camp counselors. In the 1975–77 period, about 50 junior and 20 boy and girl scout leaders were trained per year. Regardless, the Plast branches complained constantly about the lack of scout leaders. The problem lay in the fact that many who were given training did not actually work subsequently as scout leaders. For the scout leader training camps, the participants were most-

### Junior scout leader training

The 2-week course presented about 60 topics of great variety, including: how a junior scout leader is different from a boy or girl scout leader, developmental physiology and psychology of junior scout-aged children, principles governing interactions with junior boy and girl scouts, games and songs, badges and skill tests, national and religious upbringing, skills development, historical games, programs for rainy days, relations with parents, junior scout outdoorsmanship, meetings and ceremonies, camp organization, and current issues with the division. Trainees had to complete practical assignments in preparation for actual weekly meetings and summer camp activities. The trainees were evaluated by their instructors, and they also evaluated each other.

ly from the rover-rank division, but for junior scout leader camps, many were 15 or 16-year-old UPU scouts, themselves still inexperienced and ineffective leaders. Moreover, their command of Ukrainian language was inadequate for communicating authoritatively with children. A new approach for a new type of leader had to be introduced.

Among the European-bred scouts, involvement in the community, including Plast, was widespread and respected; indeed, it was expected. But among the American-bred youth of the “Me” generation, commitment to and/or interest in community affairs were much weaker. Consequently, being a Plast scout leader was beginning to lose its appeal. This development, while not yet widespread, was clearly worrisome. Some remedies were introduced. For example, the age for participating in junior scout leader training programs was increased to 16.5 years, and greenhorns were paired off with more experienced scout leaders.

In 1992–93, Daria Yakubovych, now responsible for boy and girl scout leader training, noted that unlike the traditional one- or two-week camps, seminars had proven to be a more effective method of providing training. This was especially true in the case of the rover-rank scouts, who were often employed full-time. She suggested that henceforth training should consist of a seminar, preceded by a correspondence course and followed by one year of practicum counseling. Only then should an individual be confirmed as a junior scout leader. Of 87 who received training during this period, 45 were subsequently confirmed as scout leaders. Yakubovych was also pleased by the fact that the average age of scout leaders rose perceptibly: 59 were rover-rank scouts, six were scout-seniors, and 22 were older boy and girl scouts. Moreover, the city branch executives appeared to show more interest in training scout leaders.

Number of new fully trained boy and girl scout leaders									
1975–77	77–79	79–81	81–83	83–85	85–87	87–89	89–91	91–93	93–95
47	41	23	13	9	11	11	0	29	9

## City branches

The city branches remained the pillars of the Plast organizational structure in the USA. An important part of the Ukrainian community in their cities, they reflected both the strengths and weaknesses of those communities, the changes they experienced, and the unique features they possessed. The Plast branches drew their members and leaders from the

community—or, more specifically, from those in the community whose parents had been post-WWII DPs. And in turn, the city branches served the community by providing a Ukrainian form of scouting for the youth. Overall, in spite of some internal struggles, Plast maintained a very favourable profile, remaining a well respected and useful organization in almost all Ukrainian communities throughout the USA.

### *Large branches*

In the final decades of the 20th century, six large city branches—New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and (new in this category) Cleveland—remained viable although significantly smaller entities. Most had considerable assets. In New York, the Plast headquarters, based in a large building on Second Avenue, was valued in the millions as housing prices in the city skyrocketed. The New York branch was also the primary shareholder of *Vovcha Troja*, a large resort site which had also gained in value. Plast-owned buildings in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Newark were also of considerable value. In addition, camping sites were also owned by the Chicago (until 1994), Detroit, and Cleveland city branches. However, in time, urban decay, community dispersal, and declining numbers led the Philadelphia and Newark branches to sell their headquarters (Philadelphia building sold in 1982 for \$45,000) and occupy facilities in the well-appointed Ukrainian community centers in their areas. Chicago differed in this respect, remaining intact in the old downtown Ukrainian neighbourhood, despite the relocation of many Ukrainians to the suburbs.

Another asset of the large branches was that they still had a critical mass of aging but active scouts who were willing to lend support. This relatively large membership meant that there were significant numbers of second- or even third-generation scouts who were ready to work in order to maintain their Plast branch. For example, the relatively dynamic Detroit branch consistently published a regular newsletter for its members.

### *Mid-sized branches*

In the early 1980s, there were nine mid-sized Plast city branches in the USA, with approximately 70–120 registered members in each. By reputation, they were considered to be the easiest to lead, because they were not so large as to create administrative problems and not so small as to limit the range of activities. Outstanding in this exemplary group was Buffalo. It had a small but very committed group of scout-seniors—Oksana Berezhnyska, Yaroslav Pryshlak, and the Pashkovsky family—

that provided leadership for decades, and also several active members of the younger generation. Moreover, despite its size, this Plast branch was the first in the USA to purchase a camping facility. Its weakness was that Buffalo was a city in economic decline; it did not have enough universities or employment opportunities to keep its youth, and its Ukrainian community was not large. Consequently, Plast in Buffalo did not have its own building in the city, and maintaining the *Novyi Sokil* camp became a struggle as membership declined.

### *Small branches*

The small Plast branches in the USA, 13–14 in number, were the most vulnerable. The Ukrainian communities from which they could draw on membership were small; a core group of experienced and committed scouts was often missing; and the cities where they were located were often economically troubled—Los Angeles and Denver being notable exceptions. In the early 1980s, these branches had about 30–50 members each, with insufficient scouts to form proper troops, and even the patrols were often co-ed. Some had no junior scouts and only a handful of boy and girl scouts. There was, however, considerable variation in this group.

The Plast city branch in Los Angeles drew mostly on the children of current or former Plast members who had found jobs in prosperous California. Although eager to recreate the Ukrainian youth environment in which they had grown up, the scout leaders in LA were often discouraged by the distances between the widely scattered areas where they lived. Too few to have their own building and too distant from other Plast branches, their summer camps usually took place on rented private sites near LA.

The situation in Denver was somewhat different. Although the city branch was not new, its problem was that the Ukrainian community was too small for it to grow. In the East, Albany, NY, was also based in a small Ukrainian community, with a great advantage in its small but committed cohort of scout-seniors who worked hard to maintain at least a minimum of Plast activity. Boston, where many universities attracted numerous current and former Ukrainian scouts, and which had a sizable Ukrainian community, also managed to support a small Plast branch, although the problem there was that its scout leaders often left the city when their studies were completed.

Conditions were much more problematic in relatively small and economically moribund cities such as Lorain, Youngstown, Elizabeth, Yonkers, Jersey City, Trenton, Bridgeport, Syracuse, and New Haven. At one time, Syracuse had had a dynamic Plast branch, but by the 1990s it lacked

<i>Plast city branch membership, 1978–93, % of us Plast total</i>						
	1978	1982	1987	1991	1993	1995
Albany Area, NY	29	27	23	24	24	20 (1%)
Boston	66	59	48	47	44	31 (1%)
Bridgeport, CT	43	31	12	12	0	
Buffalo	121	120	106	80	79	77 (3%)
Chester, PA	12	0	0	0	0	
Chicago	386	306	311	308	301	289 (12%)
Cleveland, OH	253	183	165	148	159	157 (6%)
Denver	27	27	34	17	17	22 (1%)
Detroit	333	230	219	196	194	200 (8%)
Elizabeth, NJ	37	29	14	6	6	
Hartford, CT	101	77	44	78	72	57 (2%)
Hempstead, NY	46	46	32	19	28	25 (1%)
Jersey City, NJ	49	31	14	0	0	
Kerhonkson, NY	40	52	27	30	30	27 (1%)
Los Angeles	86	56	53	50	63	56 (2%)
Lorain, OH	25	19	0	0	0	
Minneapolis, MN	48	71	44	17	22	
Newark, NJ	386	294	323	297	276	282 (11%)
New Brunswick, NJ	47	43	58	72	73	64 (3%)
New Haven, CT	60	55	53	10	43	22 (1%)
New York	585	448	379	331	339	341 (14%)
Passaic, NJ	182	143	128	128	128	115 (5%)
Philadelphia	413	417	337	306	308	307 (12%)
Rochester, NY	159	108	68	68	76	66 (3%)
Syracuse, NY	76	63	38	26	19	
Trenton, NJ	54	44	14	0	0	
Washington, DC	164	164	137	109	111	92 (4%)
Yonkers, NY	28	4	3	0	0	
Lone scouts	187	132	256	221	201	251 (10%)
US TOTALS	4,043	3,279	2,940	2,600	2,613	2,501



the necessary core group of activists to support itself. Bridgeport, Jersey City, and Trenton had been quite active in the 1970s, but by the 1990s their branches had to be disbanded due to too few members. In 1991, New Haven also appeared ready to close down, with only about 10 members, but the determined efforts of former and current scouts improved the situation considerably in the mid-1990s, raising membership in the city to 43. In Bridgeport, Lorain, and Yonkers (like Binghamton, Chester, and Youngstown before them), the Plast branches ceased to exist in the 1980s, and in the 1990s their membership did not even warrant Plast group status.

All of the small branches had similar problems: undersized Ukrainian communities, passing of the European-born generation that had founded them, and a lack of new individuals to replace them. By the 1990s, Baltimore, Hempstead, Minneapolis, and Syracuse branches were reduced to the status of Plast groups. At the same time, the number of lone scouts (*samitnyky*) living in distant cities with no Ukrainian communities rose.

## ***Plast-pryiat***

Although not formally a part of Plast, in the mid-1970s the *Plast-pryiat* parents' auxiliary played a quite important role in supporting the activities of the scouting organization at the height of its size and significance.

As noted above, in 1975 there were 31 *Plast-pryiat* auxiliaries, with 1,519 members. *Plast-pryiat* had its own regulations, and auxiliary directors worked closely with city branch executives. Often they also fulfilled such functions as secretaries or treasurers in the branches. Some *Plast-pryiat* members completed training courses and worked as scout leaders; others became patrons (*opikuny*) of junior and boy and girl scout units.

To pay for these expenses, *Plast-pryiat* auxiliaries depended, in part, on the dues paid by their members, which amounted to between \$3 and \$10 per year. However, the majority of the necessary funds were obtained from dances or picnics organized by the auxiliaries in their branches.

Like so much in Plast, the dynamism of the parent auxiliaries depended greatly on the commitment and sense of responsibility that typified the European-born generation of parents. For them, the existence of a purely Ukrainian scouting organization was extremely important, and they were willing to expend time, energy, and money to support it. Things began to change as more and more parents came from the American-bred generation, one which was much more pressed for time as well as much more open to non-Ukrainian options for their children. In general, moreover, they were much less willing to make the same kind

of commitments to Plast as their European-bred predecessors had done. Finally, a growing number of mixed-marriages undermined the demographic base from which *Plast-pryiat* members were usually drawn.

By 1995 there were no more reports received by the national executive about *Plast-pryiat* activity. This is not to say that parents ceased supporting Plast; they continued to help, but this support took an ad hoc, informal form. And the formal and once-dynamic parent support organization that was *Plast-pryiat* ceased to exist.

## Press and publications

In the 1970s, Plast in the USA relied heavily on the Ukrainian press to inform the community about its activities and, in doing so, attract new members. Much of the work in this area was carried out by the national press coordinator, Oleksandra Yuzeniv. Thanks to her efforts, in 1975–77 the major Ukrainian daily *Svoboda* printed 160 articles about Plast. Two other Ukrainian newspapers, *Ameryka* and *Narodna volia*, also regularly printed articles, but not nearly as frequently (22 and 11, respectively, in the same two years). Other types of publications about Plast also appeared during this period. Since many branches were celebrating their 25th anniversary in 1975, numerous anniversary publications appeared. And the Detroit city branch issued a regular bulletin, while the New York branch published its own annual reports.

Camp newsletters were printed at *Vovcha Trova* and *Bobrivka*. Often there were even newsletters produced during the annual (two- or three-day) Spring Fests. In 1976 A. Mycio organized a library at the Plast headquarters in New York.

During these years, the Worldwide Plast Congress made an important decision: it stipulated that subscriptions for Plast publications such as *Yunak*, *Hotuis!* and *Plastovyi shliakh* would be the responsibility of each city branch and not of the publications themselves. Important information, reports, and instructions appeared in the bulletin *Plastovyi lystok*, which was published regularly during the year.

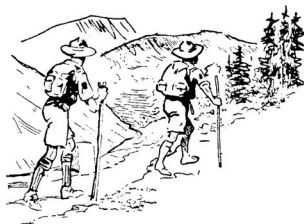
Although *Svoboda* continued to be cooperative, publishing 130 articles about Plast in 1977–79, newspapers like *Ameryka* and *Narodna volia* hardly published any at all. However, in the English-language *Ukrainian Weekly*, which was edited by an active Plast member, Roma Sochan-Hadzevych, lengthy articles about Plast did appear. But in the summer camps, the tradition of publishing newsletter practically disappeared. Even more disturbing were the difficulties encountered in col-

lecting subscription payments for Plast-produced publications. In the mid- and late-1980s, KPS no longer had a national press coordinator, and indeed, during this period, the national executive received no reports dealing with Plast press and publications .

The reason for these problems was obvious. There were a steadily decreasing number of people whose command of Ukrainian was good enough to write articles about Plast. Even the number of those who were willing or able to read Ukrainian-language publications was also declining. Clearly publications for and about Plast were an area that was exceedingly vulnerable to the impact of assimilation. In the 1988–89 period, *Svoboda* published only three articles about Plast. There were, however, still 1,200 subscribers to the Plast-produced publications, although according to Yuzeniv, 35% of the junior scouts and 28% of the boy and girl scouts did not subscribe to their journals. Striving to improve the situation, she proposed that each Plast branch pay \$25 per member (as was done in Canada) towards the cost of maintaining the publications and increasing subscriptions. However, the proposal was not implemented. Nonetheless, Yuzeniv's efforts brought results. By 1993 subscriptions for Plast publications improved considerably. But given the decreasing command of Ukrainian among young Plast members, it was clear that problems in the publications area would continue to exist, for the National Plast Executive could not compromise on its insistence on the use of Ukrainian.

Notes:

1. Hoidysh, E. [...], *Plastovyi lystok* 171 (1985), no. 3, p. 16
2. Kuz'movych [Kuzmowycz], Ol'ha. [...], *Plastovyi lystok* 191 (1993), no. 1, p. 4
3. Sodal', Petro. 'Z dosvidu iunats'koho vykhovnyka,' *Plastovyi shliakh* 170 (1984), no. [?], p. 12–18
4. Kovch [Kowcz], Khrystyna. [...], *Plastovyi lystok* 171 (1985), no. 3, p. 29–38
5. Masnyk, Katia. [...], *Plastovyi lystok* 182 (1989), no. [?], p. 30–39
6. Savchak, V. [...]



# Chapter 12

## Plast in Canada

*Oksana Zakydalsky*

### Beginnings

The first Ukrainian immigrants to Canada—Ivan Pylypiw and Wasyl Eleniak—came in 1891 from the Galician village of Nebyliv. They settled with their families in the western District of Alberta, where they founded the first Ukrainian settlement, Edna-Star. Thanks to the propaganda work of Professor Joseph (Osyp) Oleskiw and the promise of free land, promoted on behalf of the Canadian government by Sir Clifford Sifton, Ukrainians from Galicia and Bukovyna began to come to Canada en masse.

#### **Ukrainian immigration to Canada: First and second wave**

Ukrainian immigrants to Canada came in several waves. The first wave of 170,000 arrived in the years 1891–1914; 68,000 immigrants came in the second wave between the world wars; and in the third wave, after WWII, 37,000 Ukrainians came in the years 1947–54. The first wave consisted mostly of peasants, who were settled in the three prairie provinces—Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Because they had come from feudal Austria-Hungary, where they even had to pay their landlords for wood for building and fuel, in Canada they were happy to get forested lands for free (albeit with the onerous obligation to clear them within a defined time period). From their scattered homesteads, it was important for them to maintain contact as much as possible with their relatives, fellow villagers, and other Ukrainians, so church congregations became an important focal point for mutual support and community cohesiveness.

Most of the second immigrant wave (1923–29) was also from Galicia and Bukovyna, and was joined by immigrants from Volhynia and Bessarabia. Besides the prairies, they settled in the industrial centers of Quebec and Ontario, and worked in mining, steel, and forestry. In Canada, they found an established and organized, if sometimes fractious, Ukrainian community.

The idea of Plast came to Canada between the first and second world wars. With the arrival of the second wave of immigrants in the 1920s, scouting developed among the Ukrainian Canadians along two distinct examples. The Boy Scouts of Canada would visit the Ukrainian communities and encourage Ukrainians to join the Canadian organization. For example, in 1922, a Manitoba Boy Scouts organizer, A.T. MacIntosh, visited the Winnipeg Prosvita Society and explained to the Ukrainians that scouting wanted to “make Canadian citizens of the Ukrainian boys.” This initiative was supported by the Ukrainian Catholic Bishop, Nykyta Budka, and some Ukrainians responded positively to the invitation. In 1927, about 20 Ukrainian boys in Toronto joined the Boy Scouts of Canada, and a scoutmaster began to meet with them in a church hall. The newspaper *Kanadyiskyi ukrainets* (Canadian Ukrainian) wrote, “Under the influence of the scouting idea, our boys changed, and changed for the better. It’s regrettable that not all parents understand the value of being brought up as a scout, and do not encourage their children to become Boy Scouts.”<sup>1</sup>

The other method of organizing scout groups was to do so with one’s own resources and form exclusively Ukrainian groups at various community organizations. Some were organized at the Canadian Sitch Association (incorporated as the Ukrainian [Boy Scouts and] Sporting Sitch Association of Canada), later succeeded by the United Hetman Organization. In the 1930s, scouting groups were also organized by the Ukrainian National Association and at Ukrainian Greco-Catholic parishes. Rev. Wasyl Kushnir, who himself was a scout (he would later become president of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee and of the World



*Ukrainian scouts with Rev. Wasyl Kushnir, 1930s.*

Congress of Free Ukrainians), in 1935 organized the first Ukrainian Catholic scouting group in Winnipeg. It started with 25 members and by 1937 had grown to 40. In May 1936, the scout troop went to visit a Ukrainian scout group in Grand Forks, ND.



*Plast corner: a column about Plast in the Kanadyiskyi ukrainets newspaper.*

In 1932–33 the Edmonton newspaper *Ukrainksi visti / Ukrainian News* ran, about once a month, a special column on Plast. The author of the articles, Volodymyr Korchynsky, described Ukrainian scouting ideology and history, and showed how it was connected to English scouting. He encouraged all Ukrainian organizations—National Homes, churches, and associations—to form Ukrainian scout groups because, in his opinion, Ukrainian failures in the liberation struggles of 1917–20 were rooted in the undeveloped characters of leaders of that time.

Activists who really want to do something for Ukraine should turn their attention to building the good character of our youth ... But you will say: “Sure, but how does one develop character in our youth?” It is simple. There is a world organization—Plast (or Scouting)—whose goal is to make of their young members good honest citizens of good character.... A Ukrainian scout greets a fellow member with the slogan “СКОБ!” This is an acronym of “*Skoro[sic], Krasno, Oberezhno, Bystro*” (Quick, Beautiful, Careful, Speedy). Working in scouting ennoble not only those whom you are trying to develop, but even more, those who are engaged in scouting already.... Every Ukrainian activist—older as well as younger, teacher or honest farmer, laborer or spiritual guide—should acquaint himself with Plast.... I would like you to know that it doesn’t cost anything to be a scout.... you need only to expend some energy.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the titles of his articles were “The scout oath,” “Twelve reasons why your boy should be a scout,” and “Scout laws.” Korchynsky would end his articles with the the notice: “In matters of Scouting, please contact the Scoutmaster, Holdfast, Sask.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Canadian Ukrainian* newspaper printed articles not only about Plast in Canada and how to organize scout groups, but also about the dangers faced by Plast in Ukraine and information about the spread of the scouting movement throughout Europe.<sup>3</sup> Some scouting groups in Canada were in contact with the SUPE in Prague.

Overall, however, interwar efforts to establish a Plast organization in Canada were not successful, for several reasons. One was the lack of coordination at a national level; another was the different political orientations of the founders of the various scout groups. The second wave of immigrants was relatively small, comprising mainly political refugees, who had taken part, in varying ways, in the struggle for an independent Ukraine after WWI. Their political ideologies varied from monarchist to socialist to nationalist. Hence, the people were divided and not numerous enough to come together and create a single effective scouting organization.

Moreover, the earlier Ukrainian settlers were not familiar with the organizational principles of the scouting system, or of its Ukrainian traditions. The first wave of immigrants was mainly of a rural background who had come to Canada to escape the squalor of their Galician and Bukovynian villages; their political activities were aimed at securing their rights in Canadian society.

Another factor in Plast's lack of success in pre-WWII Canada might have been that its educational materials, Plast manuals and guides, were developed in Western Ukraine, and were not yet adapted to the Canadian circumstances. They were written for the urban, nationally conscious youth in Ukraine. The programs they proposed—hiking and wilderness camping—did not attract the earlier immigrants to Canada, who lived mainly in rural communities.

## **Transitional period (1949–51)**

### *DP immigration to Canada*

Plast members were among the 37,500 Ukrainians who arrived in Canada after WWII from the DP camps organized in Central Europe for refugees. The postwar immigrants were political refugees with a highly developed national consciousness and a feeling of social duty. Many of them were urbanized, educated professionals, and they settled in cities where there were greater opportunities for work. They wanted to maintain their national identity and continuity with their recently forsaken homeland; therefore, they set up a network of mutual aid in their new environment, continuing to focus on events in Europe and participating in the struggle for independence of Ukraine.

In Canada, they quickly revived the political parties, economic cooperatives, cultural associations, women's groups, and youth organizations that had been in the camps, among which was Plast. Although the ar-



*First junior girl scout camp in Canada, Smithville, Ontario, 1950.*

rival of new Ukrainian immigrants also brought fresh energy into existing Ukrainian-Canadian communities, differences between them often led to misunderstandings, stress, and splintering of organizational structures.

### *DPs establish Plast in Canada*

According to the HPS directive issued in Munich in 1947, the appointed leader-designate for Canada was a Ukrainian Catholic priest, Rev. Volodymyr Ivashko. He settled first in Winnipeg, where the founding Plast group in Canada was established on 19 March 1948. Many Ukrainians were arriving in Canada that spring, and soon there were Plast groups in the following cities: Toronto (4 April 1948), St. Catharines (22 June 1948), Montreal (13 July 1948), Edmonton (18 August 1948), Windsor (16 September 1948), and Ottawa (10 March 1949), followed later by Vancouver and Saskatoon. There were also attempts to organize Plast branches in Prince Albert (1949) and Sudbury (1951), but they were not successful.

In Hamilton, on 16 September 1948, a group of Ukrainian boys registered in the Boy Scouts of Canada as group #60 and took part in their meetings. A Plast group was established there in November 1948, and in 1955 it was reorganized as a Plast branch.

For help in dealing with his responsibilities, Rev. Ivashko created an executive. Its first member was Mykola Nakonechny, who was responsible for communications and the press. He began an information campaign in the Ukrainian-Canadian press about the establishment of Plast in Canada. Dmytro Shtunder from Toronto was appointed the national scout leader for boys, and Nadia Ruzycza-Ivakhniuk, also from Toronto, became the first national scout leader for girls.





*First junior boy scout camp in Canada, Basilian Fathers estate, Ontario, 1950.*

In 1948, Rev. Ivashko relocated to Prince Albert in Saskatchewan, and it became difficult for him to continue to fulfill his duties as Plast leader-designate. Because the majority of Plast members settled in Toronto, in April 1949 the seat of the leader-designate was moved to Toronto, and the executive became the provisional KPS, with Omelan Tarnavskij appointed as acting president. On 20 April 1950, that office became the KPS for Canada and Tarnavskij was appointed acting president. By June 1951, almost all the registered Plast members in Canada (98%) were in four Plast branches—Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, and Edmonton—and in five Plast groups—Vancouver, Windsor, Hamilton, Lethbridge, and Ottawa. The rest (1–2%) were unaffiliated (lone) members.

### *Adaptation to the new environment*

In their new environment, Plast members encountered hardships which caused difficulties in recreating the dynamic spirit that had characterized Plast during its renewal in the DP camps. In addition to challenges met by all immigrants, *plastuny* in Canada were dispersed over vast areas and had limited communication resources. Already in the first months, leaders complained about the difficulties in finding other members, and there was a notable decrease in Plast activity. Many decided not to continue in Plast; one leader later remarked that they had been “blinded by the intense [materialistic] brightness of their new environment.”

It was difficult to interest Canadian-born Ukrainian youth in Plast activities, and they did not join Plast in large numbers. Some of the reasons given in early reports said that local Ukrainians did not know the Ukrainian language, nor did their ideological motivation equal that of the newcomers. As described by the Windsor group “*Zhuravli*” in 1949, “We

tried to organize a Plast group, but the girls born here did not take their Plast duties seriously, and we stopped working with them. What a pity!”<sup>4</sup>

Other difficulties included: a lack of scout leaders, without whom scout groups would quickly fall apart, and no regular communication among Plast groups. Groups would also lose their interest due to the lack of instructional manuals and directives. Because of the necessity of searching for work, scout leaders would move often, which also impacted negatively on newly formed groups.

### *Plastovyi visnyk*

One important way to overcome the vast distances and give support to leaders was to publish educational materials. In addition to reprints and the dissemination of manuals and guides, in September 1948 the first issue of the newsletter *Plastovyi visnyk* was published in Winnipeg. Appearing monthly, the newsletter included directives, instructions, and information for the city branches, as well as articles on Plast policy.

The first issue contained the “Leader-designate’s Circular,” in which Rev. Ivashko wrote: “[Being] the liaison between the Supreme Plast Executive (HPS) as the center of the Ukrainian Plast organization and the Plast movement in Canada, [I have the authority to] resolve, on the territory of Canada, issues relating to Plast... One of my first duties is guardianship over newly arrived scouts... Life in these new circumstances is not strewn with roses. Beginnings anywhere are always difficult!”

The first issue of *Plastovyi visnyk* also contained “a list of merchandise which we received from the Plast Cooperative in Augsburg—magazines, books, and badges—which it will be possible to order in Winnipeg. I am emphasizing the importance of members’ dues: [you may say that] ‘it’s not so easy to obtain this money’. That’s true. But every member can put aside one dollar a month for Plast.” It was announced that a Plast outlet had been opened in Winnipeg, to be managed by an independent group of rover-rank girl scouts.

With the issue for August-September 1949, the publication of *Plastovyi visnyk* was transferred to Toronto. Rev Ivashko continued to stress the importance of contacts and pointed out that it was necessary to publish “not only official news, but also that the *Visnyk* should become a platform and write about all facets of Plast life on our territory. We should exchange ideas among ourselves so that we don’t become lost and estranged from each other in our Plast work in the vast Canadian space.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Plast ideology: patriotic but apolitical**

Because of its use of military terminology, the wearing of uniforms, and an emphasis on physical fitness, Plast would occasionally be characterized as a “paramilitary organization” by people who did not know its history or influences. However, the wearing of uniforms was inherited from the original English scouts, the emphasis on physical activity was influenced by the Sokil sports associations in Galicia in the 1920s, and Plast’s terminology—*kurin* (troop), *bulava* (mace), *starshyna* (commander), and so on—was adopted from the Zaporozhian Cossacks. The term *plastun* itself is a Cossack word meaning “scout.” Perhaps it was the outward attributes and symbols that attracted some youth, but parents and leaders understood that the essence of Plast was its values-based program.

Plast values emphasized the development of character with a deep social and national consciousness, through education, knowledge, and the preservation of tradition—not through narrow political doctrines. Plast’s program was geared to engage youth in maintaining their Ukrainian identity, not favoring any particular political leaning.

### *First National Plast Conference*

The first national Plast conference was summoned by the leader-designate on 3–5 September 1949 in Toronto, with over 100 members taking part. At this time, there were about 500 Plast members in Canada in 11 branches, half of them in Ontario. The delegates from Montreal (13), Winnipeg (3), Hamilton (3), Windsor (2), St. Catharines (1), and Toronto (60) presented three important matters for consideration: the Plast program, finances, and relations with the community. The inadequate level of leadership and the need to improve this situation was also a concern. The implementation of Plast values and the importance of knowledge about Ukraine were emphasized, and the adaptation of Plast programs and activities to the new environment—to ensure that the organization was sensitive to the needs and interests of the young scouts—were also considered.

As Tsiopa Palijiw later wrote: “The foundation of the national consciousness of a Ukrainian must always be knowledge about Ukraine. But the methods of obtaining this knowledge in Plast have to be appropriately chosen. Only if *plastuny* learn how varied Ukraine is (beyond the *hopak* and *varenkyky*), will they be able to understand the significant ele-

ments and core values of the Ukrainian mentality. This will provide a foundation for confidence and pride in their Ukrainian heritage.”

For the first time, the subject of Ukrainian education was brought up at the conference: early childhood and primary education, guided by professional leadership. But the most discussed topic was the presentation by Yuriy Piasecky on “My relationship to Ukraine and Canada.”<sup>6</sup> It troubled the membership, and the delegations of scout leaders requested guidance for their work in this area.

## New roots (1952–62)

### *Plast as an organization of immigrants born in Europe*

The plans and activities of Plast leaders in Canada were dominated by their belief in a mission. Because the political situation in the homeland endangered the very existence of a national consciousness, Plast leaders believed that it was their duty to preserve the Ukrainian identity. The experience of the war struggle for independence, in which some of Plast members had taken part directly, continued to form the attitude of those who had immigrated to Canada. Thus, in the early 1950s, when the UPA was still fighting the Communist takeover in Western Ukraine and the Cold War was intensifying in the West, Plast stood up to protect Ukraine. The death in Ukraine of the UPA Supreme Commander, Roman Shukhevych, on 5 March 1950 was commemorated in all the Canadian Plast branches.

But in fact, Plast’s apolitical stance sometimes made it difficult for Plast to realize itself in the politicized postwar Ukrainian immigrant community in Canada. On the other hand, Plast’s emphasis on patriotism did



*Toronto Plast-priyat spearheads fundraising campaign to raise “bricks” (denominations of \$1) for the first Plast House—Domivka.*

not attract the apolitical youth of the second and third waves of immigration, who were more interested in cultural activities such as singing and dancing. The necessity of explaining “What is Plast” to the wider community is reflected in many reports of the time, as is the lack of success in attracting new members from outside the postwar immigrants.

In time, there was a noticeable change in the orientation of the Plast program from events in Europe to a program of integration into the Canadian community. This was reflected in the annual mottos that were used for program planning and which began to emphasize more contemporary themes. For example, in 1955 the motto was “Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine” while in 1960 it was “Let’s learn about the country in which we live and the role of Ukrainians in its development.” More and more, *plastuny* were becoming active in other Ukrainian organizations and paid attention to issues that tied Ukrainians to Canada instead of continuing to focus on the liberation struggle in Europe.

### *Economic issues*

In Ukraine, in addition to its earnings through the Plast Cooperative, the organization received financing through donations from wealthy and influential people who helped in its work; for example, Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky had gifted land in the Carpathians for the Sokil campgrounds. In Canada, Plast leaders quickly realized that they could not count on the help of Ukrainian patrons (who did not exist at the time) but would have to rely on their own resources. A lot of time and effort to guarantee the existence of the organization went to dealing with practical problems: finding accommodations for weekly meetings of scouts and



*First Board meeting of the Plai Cooperative, Toronto, 1952: Stepan Gela, Yaroslav Spolsky, Maria Zeleny, Yaroslav Fediushko, Yaroslava Rebryk, Mykhailo Rebryk, Natalia Zakydalsky, and Volodymyr Kuz.*

junior scouts, finding camping sites and financing activities. This took time away from developing and implementing the Plast program.

Adaptation to new circumstances required evolving a new structure and securing finances. Toronto, where the KPS was located, also became a source of modernization that established the overall fiscal security of the organization. The innovative ideas of Andriy Charak, the first head of the Toronto branch, played a key role in establishing Plast in Canada. He was active at the local level, and other city branches adopted his ideas. His first important initiative was to form a Plast support body made up of families of Plast members as well as of members of the wider Ukrainian community—*Plast-pryiat*. The second was to purchase real estate for Plast activities.

In Toronto, Charak invited persons who were not members of Plast but who were interested in Plast to a meeting on 5 July 1948, where he made a direct appeal: “We need our own premises, finances, and help to run camps. We need a *Plast-pryiat* to help in forming public opinion about Plast. We need your help to convince the Ukrainian community—regardless of when they immigrated to Canada, and whatever their religion—that Plast belongs to them, that Plast is a necessary organization and is their responsibility.” Those present at the meeting created the first *Plast-pryiat* group in Canada, which played a key role in helping Plast take root in Canada. Many members of *Plast-pryiat* were Ukrainians who had immigrated in the earlier waves. They knew Canada not only through its politics, but also its geography, and had achieved a level of prosperity. They helped the *plastuny* to find appropriate locations for outdoor activities, such as Spring Fests and camps, to organize transportation for camps, and to provide financial aid for those who could not afford summer camp fees. They also helped Plast to register officially in the provinces as a youth organization. Notably, the person who helped do this in Ontario was John Yaremko, the first Ukrainian minister in the provincial government.

In time, *Plast-pryiat* took over some administrative duties and financial responsibilities, and was included in decision making of the national and branch leadership. In 1953, membership in *Plast-pryiat* became mandatory for the parents of *plastuny*. Members of *Plast-pryiat* played key roles in fundraising, in organizing events—for example, the New Year’s *Malanka*, which became an important source of earnings for the branches.

After the purchase of the first building for Plast in 1953, a farm was purchased for the Toronto city branch near the town of Grafton, about 130 kilometers east of Toronto, and the camping site was named *Plastova Sich*. The land was divided into two portions—one part was kept for Plast activities, and a smaller portion was partitioned into lots



*Inauguration of the Plastova Sich campgrounds in Grafton, Ontario, 1953. At center, facing the junior scouts: Lydia Palij, Chief Scout “Siryi Lev,” KPS president Omelan Tarnavskyy.*

and leased out to Plast members for the price of \$100 for their leisure use. This money paid for the purchase of the land.

The Montreal Plast branch followed this example when it purchased a farm in the Eastern Townships in 1959 for a camping site; it was named *Baturyn*. In 1954, the *Plast-pryiat* of Edmonton purchased some vacant buildings and moved them onto the property of the Ukrainian Catholic eparchy at Seba Beach for summer camps.

Other branches (Winnipeg and Saskatoon) at first shared space with other organizations. In 1953, the Winnipeg branch purchased a building with the Ukrainian Preschool Association, and in a few years became its sole owner. In Saskatoon, the Ukrainian Professional and Businessmen’s Association gifted part of a farm outside the city, and the Plast branch erected its own cabin there in 1960.

Another innovation that came from the Plast Toronto branch was creating a commercial partnership to supply Plast’s needs for uniforms and camping gear. The first meeting of the board of directors was held on 21 August 1952; in 1954 it changed to a cooperative and opened a retail outlet,



*Plai Cooperative Ltd. storefront.*

managed by Natalia Zakydalsky (who remained until its closing in 1978). Within ten years the cooperative achieved an annual revenue of \$60,000, serving not only the needs of the Toronto branch but others in Canada as well as the wider community, with books, cards, and souvenirs.

### *New city branches*

In 1952–62, Plast structures in Canada were formalized—including local, national, and international entities. After its establishment, the administrative work of the KPS office in Toronto became smoother when a secretary was hired. Communication networks were established between national and branch offices, and reinforced by regular biennial general meetings called by the KPS. But in spite of the improved effectiveness of the national executive, there was a lack of people who were ready to take on key leadership positions. Internal reports confirmed that the success of Plast was usually due to a small contingent of dedicated individuals. The development of branches was also, to a large extent, dependent on single-minded leaders. In the larger branches—Toronto, Edmonton, Montreal, and Winnipeg—there was a more or less steady increase in membership. However, some smaller branches—Windsor and Ottawa—ceased to exist when the Plast leaders moved to other cities.

In 11 years, the number of *plastuny* in Canada rose by 56%, from 861 in 1951 to 1,345 in 1962. Toronto was the largest branch, with 525 members, and Ottawa was the smallest, with 28 members. At the start of the 1960s, most branches were financially viable.

### *Activities*

The main focus of Plast activity continued to be guiding individual development through the implementation of the Plast program for children and youth aged 6 through 17. Annual planning of the program strove to keep a balance between internal Plast activities and involvement in community initiatives. Junior scouts and boy and girl scouts worked on advancing their ranks and acquiring merit badges during their weekly meetings. Annual religious celebrations and historical commemorations were marked by gatherings and special programs. Beginning with the January Christmas celebrations and ending with St. Nicholas day in December, the adherence to traditions, begun in the first phase of immigrant life, continued.

Canadian scouts did not merely satisfy the obligations to their own branches and KPS; in 1956 they began to help with funding for Plast camps



in Europe. To the fee they paid for their own camps, *plastuny* in Canada were obligated to add \$1, and this money was sent for camps in Germany. Some branches became patrons of Ukrainian schools in Germany: Winnipeg helped a Ukrainian primary school in Braunschweig while Montreal sponsored their preschool; Toronto supported a pre-school nursery in Lingen-Ems and Hanover and a primary school in Hanover. Activity in the city branches was assessed by the KPS as being “lively and promising.”

### *Leadership training*

The development and improvement of the qualifications of scout leaders was an important element of the duties of the Plast leadership for which various leadership training sessions and courses were organized. Most of the Plast scout leaders were rover-rank scouts, while the branches were usually run by adult scouts. In some branches separate scout leader units functioned and training was conducted during their meetings. In other branches, special leadership training sessions were held at camps.

In general, in 1950s and 1960s, leadership training was done sporadically, often at some camping event, like a national gathering or jamboree. In 1955, the first national leadership training for junior scout leaders was held at the national gathering in Winnipeg. At the 1957 international jamboree, leadership training sessions were held for both junior scout and boy and girl scout leaders.

The HPB issued an official leadership training program in 1955. Once the program was introduced in Canada by the KPS, the number of training sessions quickly increased.

### *Rover-rank scout division (USP)*

Although most rover-rank scouts were involved in working with the junior and boy and girl scout divisions, one could be a member-at-large with no specific duties. To encourage these adult scouts to be active, Roman Kopach and Antonina Horochowych organized a separate rover-rank session during the KPZ in 1956, and promoted discussions of policy questions such as “Does Plast respond to the needs of adult scouts?” “Does every adult scout have to be totally engaged in the work of the organization?” and “What should be the organizational structure of the adult scout section?” At the conference, it was decided that the transition from boy and girl scouts to the rover-rank scout level should take place at age 18, and from rover-rank scout to scout-senior level—at age 25 (subsequently raised to 35).

## *Camping and cross-country cooperation*

Summer camping continued to be a fundamental element of Plast activities. With increased membership and better material conditions, together with the development of new instructional methodology, opportunities also became available for cooperation between branches in organizing summer camps. All Plast branches held summer camps locally for their junior scouts and girl and boy scout troops, and in 1954 the first regional meets were organized. The Toronto and Montreal branches had a combined gathering for scouts from Ontario and Quebec from 31 July to 2 August at the community-owned Ukraina Camp, with 217 *plastuny* attending. On 4 and 5 September, Edmonton and Winnipeg held a western Canadian gathering in the Ukrainian Park Campground on Lake Winnipeg (owned by the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy), attended also by MUN youth from St. Paul, Minnesota. Both gatherings commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, a WWI military formation in Ukraine in which Plast members had participated.

The first national gathering of Plast in Canada took place the following year, 1955, at the Ukrainian Park, MB; it was organized on the working motto for that year, “Builders of Kyiv.” During the year’s activities leading up to summer, exhibits were organized around the theme Kyiv and then brought to the gathering; the best ones were later shown at various branches in a traveling exhibit. One leader from Toronto commented, “The motto was fully embraced by the scouts, and doubtless added to their knowledge about Kyiv and formed an emotional bond with the unseen capital city.”

The second part of the gathering entailed a discovery of Ukrainian Canada: excursions to old Ukrainian settlements in Manitoba, where, in 1955, one could still hear the Ukrainian language and see pioneer community life. There were 280 participants at the gathering, not only from all branches in Canada but also from Minneapolis and Chicago.

## *Plast 45th and 50th anniversaries*

In Plast’s first decade in Canada, the major event was Plast’s 45th anniversary UMPZ, which took place 3–5 August 1957 at the Toronto branch’s *Plastova Sich* camp. Over 1,200 Plast members from Canada and the USA took part, and on visitors’ day there were 4,000 people at the site, including Ontario provincial political and community leaders.



Also present were the Plast founder, Oleksander “DROT” Tysovsky, and the Chief Scout, Severyn “Siryi Lev” Levytsky, underscoring the unity of Plast in the new countries of settlement with the prewar Plast in Ukraine. Dr. Tysovsky declared, “I see nationally conscious, self-assured *plastuny*, certain in their ideals and full of confidence.”<sup>7</sup> With the goal of hallowing the memory of what had been left in Ukraine, the spacious clearing of the jamboree was recreated as a living map of the country—“A Journey Through the Lands of Ukraine.”

After the UMPZ, leadership training camps were held at the *Plastova Sich*, with scout leaders from Canada and the US taking part. After the jamboree, Dr. Tysovsky travelled around Plast branches in the two countries. He withdrew to Grimsby, ON, where he worked on a new edition of *Zhyttia v Plasti* (Life in Plast), and on 30 October 1957 he returned to his home in Vienna. This would be his only trip to North America.

In 1961 Plast celebrated its 50th anniversary. This was marked on 10–15 July with a national jamboree at the Ukrainian Park Campground on Lake Winnipeg, MB. The previous year had been devoted to a study of the history of Plast, and the camp at the jamboree was divided into six subcamps, each one marking a decade of Plast history.

The year 1961 was also the centenary of the death of the beloved Ukrainian national bard, Taras Shevchenko. To promote interest among the youth about Shevchenko’s life and works, a year-long competition was held among scout groups. On 8 July, Plast members attended in full force the ceremony in Winnipeg at which a monument to Taras Shevchenko was unveiled in front of the Manitoba parliament building by the Prime Minister of Canada, John Diefenbaker. “The presence of the leader of the government of Canada at a Ukrainian ceremony underlined the fact that the Ukrainian community and its values had been accepted as an integral part of the Canadian mainstream.”<sup>8</sup>

Over 400 Plast members from Canada and the USA took part in the ceremonies, which were attended by thousands. (It should be noted that in those years, there was no mass transportation by air and it took 36 to 40 hours to travel from Toronto/Montreal to Winnipeg by train.) The community festivities around the unveiling included a “Youth for Shevchenko” performance, where Plast girls sang and danced and the boy scouts built structures out of hiking staves.





*Main area of the 1st International Plast Jamboree, Grafton, Ontario, 1957.*



*UMPZ opening ceremonies, Grafton, Ontario, 1957. Plast Leadership: In the middle are Omelan Tarnavskyj and Tsiopa Palijiw, heads of Plast Canada; second from left is Yurij Piaseckyj—poet, composer, editor of Plast publications and founder of the Lisovi Chorty fraternity in the 1920s.*



*Plast founder Dr. Tysovsky participates in the consecration of the banner of Girl Scout Troop 10, Grafton, Ontario, 1957.*

## *Plast and the community*

Relations with the broader Ukrainian community continued to be important to Plast. In order to be formally integrated into organized community life, and to have some influence on community decision making, in 1953 Plast joined the coordinating body for Ukrainian organizations in Canada—the Ukrainian Canadian Committee (latterly renamed the Ukrainian Canadian Congress or ucc). To emphasize the independence of Plast, in 1951 the KPS had decided that Plast scouts could belong to only one youth organization; nevertheless, Plast strove to work with other youth organizations, and in 1953 it became a member of the Council of Youth of North America. Plast would send representatives as guests to events held by other youth organizations, and would also invite them to its own conferences and events.

With the election in 1953 of Tsiopa Palijiw as head of the KPS at Plast Canada's second general meeting, the national executive began to show strong leadership, particularly in the planning and development of program directives. Accordingly, in 1954, the program was to include the implementation by the branches of a "Plast Week" in the first week of May. Palijiw wrote, "The aim was to give the *plastuny* the opportunity to showcase their work and to give the community an opportunity to judge the results which the organization was able to achieve."

Each city branch had its own Plast Week program, including religious services; a grand assembly of branch members and their families; open-house scout activities; special assemblies in honor of St. George, the patron saint of Plast; exhibits; junior scout theatrical productions or games; and seminars on the topic of that year's motto. The week would typically end with a campfire or a dance on the final day.

ucc leadership disseminated requests to the community to support Plast. Many Ukrainian publications—*Novyi shliakh/New Pathway*, *Ukrainskyi farmer* (Winnipeg), *Homin Ukraïny*, *Nash vik*, *Nasha meta*, *Ukrainskyi robitnyk* (Toronto), *Ukrainskyi holos*, and *Ukrainski*



*KPS president Tsiopa Palijiw at the first eastern Canada regional camp, Quebec, 1954.*



*Opening of the first Plast House in Toronto, 1951. Signing the guest book: (from left) Bishop Isydor Boretsky, Rev. Chomyn, A. Charak, C. Wertyporoch, and I. Witushynska.*

*visti/Ukrainian News* (Edmonton)—allowed column space to Plast. These pages served as a bond with the community and were a means to popularize Plast and its ideology in wider circles. In one report, Palijiw wrote, “We must acknowledge that the Ukrainian press [in Canada] has a positive attitude towards Plast, and features a multitude of information and articles about Plast activities.”

To maintain its profile in the Ukrainian community, Plast tried to earn a good reputation, and took pains to address occasional charges that it was too elitist. Plast strove to maintain good relations with the Ukrainian Catholic and the Ukrainian Orthodox churches, and invited representatives of both confessions to its local city branch events; most branches had both Catholic and Orthodox chaplains. The Ukrainian churches played an important role in helping Plast with premises for its activities

and camps, particularly in the western cities.

One field of endeavor in which Plast played a significant role in the community was Ukrainian education. As part Plast’s mission to preserve Ukrainian identity among youth, Plast parents and adult members were among the pioneers in organizing what are now called heritage language schools. In Toronto, Oleksandra Kopach became the founder and the first principal of the Hryhori Skovoroda Ukrainian Courses in 1951. The Plast example of Ukrainian courses was so successful that other youth organizations followed it and established such courses which they allied with their churches or organizations. In Edmonton, the Ivan Franko School of Ukrainian Studies was started in 1956. Attendance at the Ukrainian Saturday schools was a requirement for the younger Plast divisions, and many adult Plast members who were professional educators taught history, geography, language, literature, cultural studies, and music there.

At the international level, the Conference of Ukrainian Plast Organizations (CUPO) was set up in 1954 at a General Conference in Niagara Falls, ON. The CUPO’s HPB replaced the HPS as the coordinating executive body of Plast. The General Conference in 1954 was attended by the leadership and delegates of the KPS of Canada and the USA.

## The “S” Campaign

Plast contributes to Ukrainian and mainstream society not only as an organization but also through its individual members. They are active members of the communities they live in and join in their efforts—and they also take matters into their own hands or seize opportunities to initiate something new and involve others. In June 1949, an appeal was issued by Atanas Figol, head of the HPS, to all adult *plastuny* to become not only subscribers to the *Entsyklopediia ukraïnoznavstva* (Encyclopedia of Ukraine, or EU), which was being edited in Sarcelles, France, and published by Plast’s publishing house Molode Zhyttia in Munich, but that they should convince at least one other person among their friends and acquaintances to become a subscriber.

In 1961–62, the NTsh in Sarcelles went through a crisis: lack of finances, a precarious operating situation, and physical and mental exhaustion of personnel. A plan to create a permanent sponsor—Patron of the NTsh—was proposed. In response, an initiative group of scout-seniors was formed in Toronto by the *Karpatiski Vovky* fraternity and *Ti, shcho hrebli rvut* sorority. They wrote to Sarcelles that they had initiated the “S” Campaign to take on sponsorship of the Sarcelles project—and guaranteed that they would send a monthly stipend to Sarcelles. The “S” Campaign (named *Aktsiia “S”* with the Cyrillic letter “C” to signify the first letter of “Sarcelles” in Ukrainian) spread to other Plast seniors, who took it on as a 50th anniversary project of the UPS division. Sponsorships by other countries’ KPS were spurred, and *Aktsiia “S”* spread to the general Ukrainian community, and even became an office of the UCC.

Tsiopa Palijiw, who was then the president of the Canadian KPS, ensured the participation of not only scout-seniors but all members of Plast in this campaign. As she put it, “How can we educate youth to be attached to their national culture if our society at large is not interested in its cultural workers?” In Toronto, annual Plast arts and crafts bazaars earned substantial funds for the EU project in Sarcelles. The Plast girl scout division in Toronto became the largest single sponsor of the EU. The “S” Campaign was not merely a one-time collection of money but a commitment of long-lasting support. The Plast campaign to sponsor the EU expanded and was taken up by the whole Ukrainian community; it lasted until 1989.



*Toronto girl scouts’ fundraising bazaar, 1963.*



### *Summary: Successes and problems of this decade*

The years 1952–62 were very important for Plast in Canada. After the enthusiasm of the transition period and the first steps of resettlement in a new country, this decade was filled with hard work to safeguard the long-term existence of the organization. In this aspect, Plast was very successful—it established a strong material base, introduced *Plast-pryiat* as a support body; some branches also managed to purchase their own buildings and camping sites. Plast also established itself in the Ukrainian community as a significant youth organization that participated in community affairs, while at the same time retaining its independent and politically neutral character.

To be sure, development of the organization was held back by the difficulties commonly encountered by all immigrants trying to build a new life for themselves and their families. Many members were burdened by their daily lives and had little time for Plast. Although leadership training was formalized by the national executive, which published and disseminated program materials, there was nevertheless a constant lack of scout leaders in all divisions, as well as in the national executive. It was, however, most noticeable in the smaller branches.

Those who remained faithful to the Plast mission accepted the challenge to adapt to the new realities and maintain the organization's sensitivity to new circumstances. Opportunities to travel and attend national and international conferences and jamborees helped in the development of a networked, and thus stronger, Plast community; this trend continued to improve in the next decade.

## **Collision with Canada (1963–75)**

### *Transition from immigrants to ethnic constituents*

During its second decade, Plast in Canada faced new challenges. As time passed, the Canadian mainstream had a greater influence on Ukrainian individuals and families, and through them the organization. It also became more obvious that the liberation of Ukraine was not likely, so while looking around themselves in Canadian society, Plast families continued to work to preserve their national identity, now under subtle but strong assimilation pressures.

The two biggest changes within Plast were in the interpretation of its ideological mission and the advancement of a new generation into positions of authority. Already in the mid-1960s, *plastuny* who grew



*Junior boy scout camp, with leader Roman Kopach. A memorable plastun who could always relate to children, “Batko Slon”, as he was known in his Lisovi Chorty fraternity, was active in Plast from the 1920s to 1990s.*

up in Canada began to assume leadership roles in the organization. Gradually, Plast was becoming less an organization of immigrants and more of a Ukrainian Canadian organization with dual loyalties.

This shift took place in the wider context of socioeconomic changes occurring in Canada. Material prosperity and the new government policy of multiculturalism encouraged and supported ethnic groups to feel that Canadian society considered them to be its constituent part. The government also supported multiculturalism financially, and in 1966 Plast received its first federal grant. The inclusion of groups such as Plast in all-Canadian initiatives such as the celebrations in 1967 of Canada’s centennial had an important influence on the new orientation of the organization. Plast joined in the ongoing debates about the Canadian Constitution and multicultural issues, and in 1971, it presented the federal government with a brief on cultural and linguistic rights of ethnic groups.

### *Ukrainian language retention*

With the greater focus on Canada, the problem of language retention was growing more acute, and the question arose as to whether Plast should continue to keep its strict requirement of language facility. In some branches, children who hardly understood the Ukrainian language were accepted in order to retain membership. By 1967 all the junior scouts were Canadian-born, and *Plastovyi visnyk* began a serious preoccupation with the problem of language.

Plast in Canada took a stronger position on this issue than Plast organizations in other countries where language retention was weaker. The leadership stood on the principle that it was necessary to retain and improve the status of the Ukrainian language within Plast in Canada. In spite of changes to other educational, mentoring, and programmatic guidelines, there was no compromise on the issue of language. In Plast activities, only the Ukrainian language was to be used—but there was no escaping the fact that language usage was becoming weaker.

One of the reasons why Ukrainian language retention remained at an acceptable level in Canada was that through its individual members Plast participated actively in the development of Ukrainian education in the community. Tsiopa Palijiw and many other Plast members joined the Association of Ukrainian Pedagogues of Canada, promoting excellence in Ukrainian schooling through a standard curriculum, textbooks, and teacher training. Seeing that the problem of language retention among children was beginning to appear at a younger and younger age, in 1964 Palijiw initiated the establishment of a Ukrainian-language preschool—the first *Svitlychka* was founded in Toronto.

### *Plast and the community*

Plast continued to play an active role in the UCC, particularly taking part in discussions of multiculturalism issues. Plast members were also among the founders in 1967 of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians (SKVU), whose first president was a *plastun*, the Rev. Wasyl Kushnir.



*Ukrainian youth demonstrate in front of Soviet embassy in Ottawa.*

When arrests and repression of human rights activists in Ukraine began in 1965, Plast joined in community projects to defend dissidents and political prisoners. The main involvement in these initiatives was by rover-rank scouts, mostly through campus Ukrainian student organizations. They disseminated information materials about Ukraine, published and distributed documentation about the suppression of human rights, and tried to promote the inclusion of human rights on the agenda of international discussions in which Canada took part. Plast also organized letter-writing campaigns from scouts to political prisoners.

### *Scout leadership training*

The systematization of scout leadership training programs began during the 1970s, when they were being held on a regular basis. The course programs included rules and guidelines for creating scout program content, structure of scout meetings, assessment and progress criteria, workshops, and methodology of working with youth, as well as mandatory reading of Yuriy Starosolsky's philosophical treatise of Plast, *Velyka hra*. Daria Darewych, the KPS executive responsible for training programs, collected content materials on how to conduct meetings, and was the first to use audio-visual aids in the training courses. At that time, the scout leadership courses for junior scout leadership training were also updated, and included activities that were tested out at junior scout camps in Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg. This work was supervised by Iroida Wynnyckyj and, later, Tania Onyschuk.

By the mid-1970s, all scout leadership training in Canada was conducted at the national level, with an established program and a regular schedule. The training program was continuously reviewed and improved, new and useful materials for the participants were upgraded.

Training for scout leaders was held annually, while junior scout leader training took place biennially and included practical activities with the junior scouts. Organizing leadership training became a priority for the KPS. Candidates for the courses were mostly subsidized for the cost of the travel and training, which was shared by KPS and the branches, respectively.

The KPS was responsible for course development within the parameters of the basic prerequisites set by the *Orlynyi Kruh* regarding the UPN program and by the *Skobyn Kruh* regarding the UPU program. In this process, the Canadian executive demonstrated an admirable openness to new topics, reworked concepts, and modern interpretations, including self-education, self-discipline, democratic leadership, cooperation, risk assessment, environmental protection, respect for personal dignity, and

the problem of bullying. The training methodology included workshops, practical sessions, and cooperative activities. Instructors with professional experience in a required subject were invited to present. Most importantly, it was understood that the upgrading of program content and delivery was to be continuous.

The following Canadian KPS members made significant positive contributions to the organization of scout leadership training courses (for scouts and scoutmasters): Tsiopa Palijiw, Daria Darewych, Orest Dzulynsky, Tanya Dzulynsky, Ann Szyptur, Orest Haras, and Oksana Zakydalsky; and for junior scout leadership courses, the key innovators were Iroida Wynnyckyj, Tania Onyschuk, Sophia Kachor, Oksana Wynnyckyj, Oles Slywynskyj, Rosia Slywynska, and Christine Zeltway.

In 1968, the first *Shkola Bulavnykh* (SH-B) leadership and camping skills training camp for female scout leaders took place at the *Baturyn* camp near Montreal, under the guidance of Tanya Melnyk and the sorority *Ti, shcho hrebli rvut*. Subsequent SH-B camps took place in the US.

In 1973, the first *Zolota Bulava* (ZB) leadership training camp took place for boy scouts on 13–20 July at *Plastova Sich*. The founder of ZB and its first leader was Orest Dzulynsky, with associates Andriy Komarovsky, Leonid Terplak, Ihor Starak, and Orest Haras. A ZB camp for girl scouts was organized by Tanya Dzulynsky in 1974, and they have since been held concurrently, preparing the scouts for patrol and troop-level leadership. Participants are required to be at least 14 years of age, and (unusually for any Plast camp) to complete advance home-

work assignments.

Plast in Canada also sent its scouts for training outside the organization. For example, during this period, the province of Ontario held three-week leadership training camps (“Bark Lake”), in which Plast members participated on the recommendation of their city branch.



*At camp Zolota Bulava, passing the bulava (mace), as a symbol of leadership.*



«Vedmedyky» Toronto Plast girls' volleyball team were Canadian National Junior Champions in 1965 and 1966.

### *Plast membership structure and statistics*

In Canada, total Plast membership reached its highest number in 1968, with 1,707 scouts in all divisions. Analyzing the membership figures at different age levels shows the role of demographics in this statistical dynamic. First, junior scout numbers began to increase significantly in 1953, and reached a peak of 555 in 1962. At the boy and girl scout level, the numbers began to increase in 1958 and reached their peak of 785 in 1968. In 1975, Toronto alone had five boy scout troops and four girl scout troops.

Some rover-rank fraternities and sororities existed only in Canada, while others were international. At the national level, they were organized into locals at each branch. In 1975, there were five locals in Canada, with none in Ottawa or St. Catharines.

In the 1960s, in order to verify that Plast programs and directives in Canada were being properly implemented, the KPS began to conduct inspections and audits. Some regulations were modified as a result; for example, in 1968 the physical fitness merit badge (VFV) became mandatory. In order to encourage fitness activities, a national scoutmaster for sports was appointed; Vera Malanczyj visited scout camps and assessed campers' fitness levels, reinforcing the policy that physical fitness was an essential part of the Plast program.

From 1973, the boy and girl scout divisions began to coordinate the activities of their troops more closely. Their leadership training program was modified to encourage greater cooperation between female and male scoutmasters. For the junior scout division, the leadership councils (ROV) continued to operate separately for boys and girls, but their programs were the same.

Modernization and long-term planning were the main trends in Plast activity in its third decade in Canada. In 1965 changes were made to the Plast Charter at the 6th General Meeting, with the aim of improving the quality of the organization. This included inviting experts who were not members of Plast to assist in appropriate aspects of program implementation. Plast also began to encourage parents to become Plast scout leaders, especially those who had qualifications in education.

In general, members were given more say in decision-making; even at the scout level, the patrol leaders' council (*rada hurtkovykh*, as members ex officio of the troop executive) could debate and vote on decisions concerning the troop. In the later 1970s, the KPS became less hierarchical as well, and procedures were simplified; for example, report frequency was reduced from quarterly, to biannually, to annually.

The regulations for *Plast-pryiat* auxiliaries had been passed in 1967, but as Plast projects became more ambitious, the role of the *Plast-pryiat* became even more crucial. Thus, the auxiliaries acquired membership rights in the local branch executives. *Plast-pryiat* supported Plast with supervision, advice, technical services, and administrative duties in implementing the Plast program. The auxiliaries also engaged in fundraising and assistance with summer camps, as well as events, exhibits, contests, etc. From 1967, there was even a *Plast-pryiat* representative in KPS, who attempted to foster cooperation between branch auxiliaries. But because the work of *Plast-pryiat* was dependent on local conditions, creating a national *Plast-pryiat* network was not successful. In 1968, there were 885 members of *Plast-pryiat* in Canada, half of whom were in Toronto.

### *UPU division camping: Troop-centered focus*

In 1963–75, responding to the needs and interests of teenagers, camping for Plast boy and girl scouts in Canada became more diverse. The first troop-centered camps were held in 1960, near Toronto. They differed from the generally prevalent Plast camps at the time (particularly in the USA) in that the scouts themselves were involved in the planning (under the guidance of the troop's scoutmaster), including selection of location and type of camp and organization of the program.

For example, in 1964, three troops of girl scouts each organized their own separate camps, which took place at the *Plastova Sich* camp. They gave very positive feedback regarding the concept of independent troop camps. The program of Plast Troop #10 consisted of several modules geared to different interests: journalism, cooking, nature studies. Troop #4 dedicated their camp program to a Hutsul theme: culture, arts

and crafts, songs and legends. Troop #12 focused on the culture of the Trypillia era. That year, four boys' troops also held independent camps.

After this experience, however, troop-organized camps usually took place outside the Plast-owned camps. In Ontario, there were canoe camps in Algonquin Park; in Quebec—hiking camps in the Laurentians or across the us border in New Hampshire. Troops from smaller Plast branches sometimes combined their forces, for instance, St. Catharines and Hamilton together.

Mountaineering camps in the Rockies were begun in 1964 by Jurij Darewych, a scoutmaster at the Edmonton Plast branch. For his troop, he organized the first camp in the Rockies, *Khomoliyngma*, with assistance from mountaineer expert scout-seniors Yaroslav Roslak and Luboslav Bairak. The Plast campers conquered three peaks and hiked through the Columbia Glacier. This camp served as a tryout in preparation for a national Plast gathering in Jasper in July 1966, under the slogan “The Mountains are Waiting for You.” Since then, hardly a year goes by without a Plast camp of some kind in the Rockies, including both troop camps from Edmonton and Calgary as well as national and international jamborees.

To be sure, the scouts themselves were most interested in camping variety, with respect to locations, programs, and camp leader and instructor-personnel. With their troops they happily organized and participated in



*A group of level-III girls and adult scout leaders summits Mt. Temple (11,626 ft.) in the Rocky Mountains, the third-highest mountain in Banff National Park, with Plast guide Orest Haras, KPT 1991.*



mountaineering, canoeing, sailing, sports, hiking, biking, and leadership training camps. Combining program variety with age-cohort networking opportunities, cross-Canada camps according to UPU division rank level (КРТ) began in 1971. Typically, the city branches would share the responsibility of hosting the different sub-camps; for example, at the 1973 КРТ, the novice boy and girl scouts camped near Ottawa; level 2 rank scouts canoed in Kenora, ON, and level 3 rank scouts hiked in the Rockies.

The first “*Stezhky Kultury*” camp in Canada was held in August 1973, organized by the *Pershi Stezhi* sorority under the guidance of Oksana Brezhun-Sokolyk. There were 22 boy scout and 22 girl scout participants from various Plast branches, as well as four leaders and 14 support personnel and instructors. Costs were partially covered by government grants. In 1975, the 6th girls’ and 13th boys’ UPU troops of Edmonton held their troop camps on a Blood Indian Reserve in southern Alberta, combining hiking activity with immersion in the local First Nations culture.

Canadian Plast boy and girl scouts, as well as rover-rank scouts, also took part in Plast regional camps in the USA, and in leadership training camps such as L-SH and SH-B, as well as specialized camps which had an organized network in the USA (usually run by fraternities or sororities)—sports camps, sea camps, ski camps (in the winter), culture camps.

### *Jamborees – national and international*

In 1967 it was again Plast Canada’s turn to organize an international commemorative jamboree (22 to 31 July). This time it was held in Quebec—at *Baturyn*, the camp of the Montreal branch—and at Canada’s centennial celebrations in Ottawa. Whereas at the 1957 jamboree DROT had remarked on his impressions of a “foreign country, foreign language, foreign melodies,” Plast members saw themselves differently in 1967. Almost all the boy and girl scouts who took part in this jamboree were born in “America,” and the country in which they lived was not foreign to them.<sup>9</sup> The jamboree marked not only the 55th anniversary of Plast but also the 100th anniversary of Canada. The badge of the jamboree featured the Plast emblem on the background of a Canadian maple leaf.

The jamboree at *Baturyn* camp was attended by 536 participants from Canada and 805 from the USA. The program included a visit to the World’s Fair International and Universal Exposition in Montreal (Canada’s main celebration during its Centennial year) and a musical presentation by Plast on the EXPO 67 grounds. On Ukrainian Youth Day in Ottawa, Governor-General Roland Michener hosted Plast in his residence, and they were also welcomed by Prime Minister Lester Pearson.

Plast youth visited the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament; while in the National Library, a plaque was unveiled, funded by Ukrainian youth organizations, to mark the centennial of Canada and the contribution of Ukrainians to its development. Plast received a personal welcome letter on Senate notepaper from Senator Paul Yuzyk, in Ukrainian.

Although Plast's international jamborees are organized to emphasize the unity of Plast, the forms of these celebrations do attest to the fact that Plast defines its place differently in the various countries where it exists, reflecting the position that the Ukrainian community has achieved and occupies in the given country. From 1967 onwards, the programs of jamborees taking place in Canada have been connected to Canadian celebrations or have included some contact with Canadian society.

The national gathering from 22 July to 2 August 1970 in Manitoba, under the motto "In the Paths of the Pioneers" marked the 100th anniversary of the province of Manitoba. There was a large number of participants—490 boy and girl scouts and 73 leaders. The program included a parade in front of the provincial parliament in Winnipeg and an assembly in front of the Taras Shevchenko monument which stands there; a trek through Ukrainian settlements in Manitoba; meetings with Ukrainian pioneers and First Nations; and a visit to the Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin with a show of Ukrainian-Canadian singing and dancing. Government grants helped to defray transportation costs, and funded the travel costs of the scout leaders.

Plast Canada also took part in events organized by Plast in other countries: in 1962, Canadian *plastuny* celebrated the 50th anniversary of Plast at *Vovcha Trova* camp in New York state, and 60th anniversary celebrations at *Vovcha Trova* in 1972, to which 700 participants travelled from Canada. Canadian Plast members took part in the unveiling of the Taras Shevchenko monument in Buenos Aires (December 1971). Plast Canada also took part in fundraising for a Plast House in Buenos Aires, and sent a contribution of \$10,000 in 1975.

### Summary

In the years 1963–75, Plast in Canada overcame the challenges of assimilation and was able to modernize to ensure the long-term future existence of the organization. At the same time, while adapting to the reality of diaspora life in Canada, Plast kept its specific Ukrainian character—not least thanks to Canada's newly introduced official multiculturalism policy.

Plast's emphasis on leadership training and the attention it paid to raising the quality of the organization were largely successful. The quali-

fications of scout leaders improved, although sometimes it proved to be difficult to transfer the enthusiasm they showed at the training sessions to their subsequent scout leader activity (which was strictly on a volunteer basis). Lack of stability in the scout leader roster remained a problem; with frequent changes, and it was difficult to form a steady base of expertise.

Among the successes of this decade was the fact that individual Plast members were seen to begin to occupy leadership roles outside of Plast—in the Ukrainian community and overall in the Canadian sphere.

## **Passing the baton (1975–90)**

The most significant change in the organization at this time was the change in generations in the leadership of Plast. That process had begun in the early 1970s, and at the end of the decade, the leaders of Plast in Canada were persons who were either born or grew up in Canada, as younger Canadian Plast members took over the leading roles in the organization.

New methods were adopted, and Plast became more attuned to the Canadian worldview. Instead of emphasizing duty and service, Plast leaders considered how to identify and capture the interest of youth in matters Ukrainian, from a Canadian perspective. Leadership training programs continued to be a focus of activity, and supporting scout leaders was the main priority of the KPS in this area, as it organized scout leader and leadership training courses, and published and disseminated instructional materials for Plast organizations the world over.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Plast struggled for retention of Ukrainian identity within a community that increasingly surrendered to the assimilating pressure coming from the Canadian circumstances. Leading up to the last decade of the millennium, two radically different factors affected Plast in Canada: (1) the growing influence of assimilation; and (2) the changes in Ukraine which led to the declaration of independence in 1991.

In terms of numbers, the Ukrainian community in Canada was growing, although in identity it was becoming more Canadian and less Ukrainian. According to the 1991 census, of the 1,054,300 persons declared themselves to be of Ukrainian background, only 8% had been born in Ukraine and only 19% gave Ukrainian as their mother tongue, the language first learned and still understood. As an ethnic group in Canada, a larger percentage of Ukrainians were Canadian-born than any other group, except the two founding nations, British and French.

Ukrainians also moved forward professionally and achieved higher earnings. Those living in rural areas migrated to urban ones, and urban



*A new generation of Plast leaders at kpz, 1984. President of kps Canada at the time was Iroida Wynnyckyj. 1st row: Antonina Horochowych, Daria Darewych, Alexander Hordienko, Maria Horban, Lubomyr Romankiw, Iroida Wynnyckyj, Roman Wrzesnewskyy, Anatoliy Stawnycky, Tania Onyschuk, Khrystia Bolubash; 2nd row: Ivan Franiw, Halyna Kis, Nestor Chornyj, Iryna Pawliw, Maria Pawlyshyn, Volodymyr Maziar, Erast Huculak, Ostap Hawaleshka, Volodymyr Prokopec, Tamara Dudko, Sophia Charak, Andriy Charak, Anna Iskat, Natalie Nebesny, Oksana Wynnyckyj, Tanya Dyczok, Lubomyr Chabursky; 3rd row: Motriia Ilnycky, Tanya Dzulynsky, Julia Woychyshyn, Maria Komarnycky, Olena Babiy, Roman Mushka, Bohdan Kolos, Oksana Zakydalsky, Daria Kowalyk, Roman Zazula, Yurii Levytsky, Khrystia Mulkevych, Marko Baluschak, Maria Komisar, Orest Dzulynsky, Volodymyr Kullish, Bozhena Iwanusiw, Ruslana Wrzesnewskyy; 4th row: Ivan Wynnyckyj, Irena Wrzesnewskyy, Ihor Bardyn, Halyna Junyk, Orest Babiy, Roman Waschuk, Andriy Shchuka, Boryslav Bilash, Yurii Vysochansky, Bohdan Diakow, Khrystia Tatarsky, Marta Chewpa, Roman Kopach, Roman Chabursky; 5th row: Adolf Hladylowych, Mykola Junyk, Christine Krucko, Teodor Kuschak, Natalia Voronka, Mykhailo Loza, Dana Boyko, Mykhailo Savaryn, Oleksander Marchenko, Bohdan Kowaluk.*

residents moved to the suburbs. This scattering of residents reverberated negatively on community life. For example, in Toronto Bloor West Village became the center of Ukrainian life, where Ukrainian commercial institutions and community organizations moved to, while the church parishes that were established long ago in central neighborhoods were emptying.

Parallel to such demographic changes, interest in Ukrainian issues declined. People born and brought up in Canada had a different attitude from immigrants towards their Ukrainian identity. Fewer were ready to dedicate a large share of their time to Ukrainian issues. The clearest proof of this was the decline in the knowledge and use of the Ukrainian language. The issue of language was a constant theme during this period. Moreover, the focus of Plast activity continued shifting to the Canadian context, as neither Plast members nor members of other Ukrainian organizations expected to return to Ukraine.



*Junior scouts in Toronto reading the UPN magazine Hotuis!*

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Plast organization achieved a level of stability, structure, and resources. The larger city branches owned their own buildings, Montreal and Toronto had their own developed camping sites, and Winnipeg and Edmonton camped regularly on Ukrainian community-owned sites. But membership numbers declined, albeit with strong demographic reason. The organization continued to struggle with its chronic problem—how to retain and develop a base of qualified scout leaders, who were necessary for Plast to be able to continue its mission of implementing the Plast program.

At the international level, the Third Plast Congress adopted the concept of a “permanent diaspora,” underlining the fact that the organiz-

ation had become rooted in the countries where Ukrainians had settled after WWII. In Canada, a concrete manifestation of this evolved relationship was when the KPS decided to deposit its historical materials and documents in the National Archive of Canada. The dilemma that now confronted Plast was how to balance its goal of bringing up nationally conscious Ukrainian youth against the fact that they had never experienced Ukraine, nor probably would they experience it in the near future.

Because of its decision to remain faithful to its original values, Plast began to be considered an elitist organization. Most of the families were from the middle class, and working fluency in Ukrainian language continued to be a membership requirement. While previously Plast's policy had been to accept all Ukrainians, this changed to a new approach: "Plast cannot serve the whole community. If we are to retain the Ukrainian face of Plast, we cannot accept children who don't speak the Ukrainian language." This became a contentious issue across Canada, particularly in the western provinces with their substantial proportion of earlier immigrant wave populations, and with families of intermarriage with non-Ukrainians.

### Organization

A Charter for Plast Canada was first adopted at the 6th National General Meeting in 1965, with amendments added in 1967 and 1975. In 1975, the official adopted trilingual name was: *Пласт—Організація Української Молоді в Канаді; Plast Ukrainian Youth Association of Canada; Association de la Jeunesse Ukrainienne du Canada—Plast.*

In the Charter, the objectives were defined as follows:

To develop the moral, intellectual, and physical character of Ukrainian youth in Canada; bring up youth to be nationally conscious, responsible, and active citizens—using Plast methodology based on Plast ideology, founded on the Plast Oath, Law, and Three Main Duties; to nurture ancestral traditions in the youth; and to pass on knowledge and an understanding of the past, history, and culture of Ukraine.

Membership in Canadian Plast was divided into five categories:

1. Junior scouts and boy and girl scouts, 6 to 17 years of age;
2. Adult members: rover-rank scouts, aged 18–35, and scout-seniors, over 35 years of age;
3. Plast parents' auxiliary and friends (*Plast-pryiat*);
4. Honorary members; and
5. Patrons.

The National GM of Plast remained the supreme decision-making body. Although the GM was open to all members, only members of the KPS, heads of branches, scout leaders, and elected delegates could vote. The GM would take place biennially, as part of the annual KPZ in alternating years.

To incorporate Plast in Canada, the amended Charter was sent to the federal government in Ottawa and on 10 April 1978, Plast received a federal charter as a national organization (up to that time it had had only provincial charters). In that year, Daria Darewych became the head of the KPS, the first representative of the new generation of Plast members who had grown up in Canada.

### *Ukrainian language*

In this period, the Ukrainian language issue came to the fore. Knowledge of the language was considered a non-negotiable criterion for membership and exceeded the priority of increasing enrollment. Under the direction of junior scoutmaster Tania Onyschuk, a campaign to improve the usage of Ukrainian was launched. Her recommendation was to confront the problem on three levels: children, leaders, and parents. New methods and activities were to be integrated into existing programs: audio-visual materials, language seminars for scout leaders, and regular parent meetings to increase their involvement. Various language activities were suggested: puppet shows, theater groups, choirs, radio programs, newspapers, illustrated dictionaries, writing articles and letters, debates, new songs, crosswords, and labeling pictures of plants, animals, and insects.

Plast Canada also took a clear stand in the international Plast context against the demands of other countries to allow the use of other languages or the introduction of a two-path solution—use of both the Ukrainian and English languages in its programs. (For those who think that youth do not value language, one can give this example: on an evaluation form filled out by scouts at the 1987 jamboree, one comment was: “Leaders and adult scouts did not pay attention to language usage.”)

The policy to retain Ukrainian language usage in Plast was justified when the revival of Plast began in Ukraine and the Ukrainian language was the first point of contact between Plast in Canada and in Ukraine. Political changes in the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1980s again opened the possibility of contact with Ukraine. But instead of a return to the homeland, Plast in Canada became the leader in supporting the revival of Plast in Ukraine, creating a bridge of continuity between the past and the present.



*“Reach for the Top” competition for Ukrainian youth organizations, Toronto, late 1970s. At the Plast table are Tania Dyczok, Roman Waschuk, Lesia Potoczny, and George Ivanchyshyn.*

### *International jamborees*

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the statehood of Ukraine and the 65th anniversary of Plast, an international Plast jamboree was held in Alberta on 4–18 August 1978, in which 953 scouts took part, from the USA (416), Australia (20), Argentina (2), Britain (13), Canada (415), West Germany, and France (20). The head of the organizing committee and director of the jamboree was Jurij Darewych. Government grants from Alberta and Ontario covered the costs of the scout leaders as well as those of overseas participants. At the end, the Plast scouts stayed at a Stoney First Nation reservation, participating in their traditions and ceremonies.

The jubilee jamboree to mark the 70th anniversary of Plast was held at *Vovcha Tropa* camp in the USA, with 350 *plastuny* from Canada attending. As noted in the jamboree report, “The friendly cooperation between the national executives of Canada and the USA was very important to the success of the jamboree.” A year later, on 14–22 August 1983, a second jubilee jamboree was held in West Germany, with international participation. There were about 400 participants at the jamboree, many of whom toured Europe afterwards, thanks to an organizational initiative by Jurij Darewych. Level I boy and girl scouts (12–14) went to Italy under the guidance of Tania Onyshuk; level II–III scouts (15–17) toured West Germany with Daria Darewych; and rover-rank scouts, led by Marko Horbatsch, hiked in the Carpathians in Romania (Ukrainian southern Bukovyna and eastern Hutsul regions).



### International Jamboree 1978: “Going West”

by Daria Darewych

Participants in the jamboree included 943 *plastuny* from all countries where Plast was active. This was the first time that all countries were so well represented—a significant success for the Edmonton organizers. Plast youth had the opportunity to see the achievements of Ukrainians in Western Canada when they spent time at the Ukrainian Village Museum and the surrounding countryside, while local Ukrainian residents had a rare opportunity to see “masses” of scouts.

Some of the descendants of Ukrainian pioneers were moved to tears by the performances of the Plast youth and their general demeanour! “I did not know there could be such nice kids,” said one woman who was hosting *plastuny* in her home in Smoky Lake, AB. “Have they come from Ukraine?” asked an old man, as this was the first time he had seen young scouts in uniform and heard them speaking Ukrainian.

The performances of the Plast marching band from Toronto added a lot to the celebratory atmosphere. Penetrating bugle calls awoke the campers and alerted them to lights out. In the evening before they set out into the Rockies, when a fog descended on the fields of the Ukrainian Village Museum, the sound of the trumpet was a signal to lower the flags, while throughout the subcamps, everyone stood at attention.

There surely will be many unforgettable memories—pioneer wooden houses, the Edmonton skyline, the Commonwealth Games, majestic Rockies, glaciers, mountain streams and flowers, even the torrential rain, snow, sunrise, hot springs, bears, moose, Northern lights, and more! The three-day hikes along wild trails and over mountains brought the most enjoyment. In spite of rain and physical exhaustion, most hikers returned to their base camps happy. Those who scaled the mountaintops—Baybell, Eiffel, Norquay, Sawback—had something to boast about. But everyone had a story to tell!

The provincial government of Alberta helped a lot, allowing camping at the Ukrainian Village Museum free of charge, providing practical assistance with finances and even radio communications. The managers of Jasper, Banff, and Kootenay national parks not only made camping for such a large group of *plastuny* possible, they were helpful in every possible way.

— translated excerpts from “Reflections after the Jamboree '78,” *Plastovyi visnyk* 4(131), 1978.



*UMPZ 1987, Plastova Sich camp, Grafton, Ontario. Displayed at the back of the stage are the emblems of various fraternities and sororities of the Plast rover-rank scouts and scout-seniors.*



*75th Anniversary of Plast, march through Ottawa, 1987.*



*Participants in the 1987 International Plast Jamboree visit Ottawa. On Parliament Hill, MP Andrew Witer (himself a Plast member) presents*

*a cheque from the Canadian government to Orest Dzulynsky, president of KPS Canada. Behind them: Wasyl Janischewsky (head of HPB), MP Lloyd Axworthy, Julia Woychyshyn (chair of KPR), Governor General Ramon Hnatyshyn, and Peter Savaryn (president of UCC).*

To mark the 75th anniversary of Plast in 1987, it was again Canada's turn to organize the international jamboree. The jamboree was headed by Orest Dzulynsky and there were 578 boy and girl scouts, 133 scout leaders, and 413 adult scouts—together 1,124 participants; a further 882 guests came on visitors' day. The program of the jamboree was divided into three parts: camping on the lakes of Ontario and in the mountains of Quebec; a visit to the capital Ottawa, with a march through the city to demonstrate Plast on its 75th anniversary; and in conclusion, a celebratory program at the *Plastova Sich* camp.

Some innovations were introduced into the program of the jamboree. To foster friendships, the camp patrols were mixed, combining scouts from various troops, cities, and countries. To plan a complex program and help in the distribution of food and gear, the KPS office used a computer. And a 120-page professionally prepared photo album of the jamboree was published, under the editorship of Tanya Dzulynsky, featuring photos of all campers, identified by name.

The camp director assessed the event: "Jamboree 1987 proved that in today's conditions, it is more beneficial to give youth the opportunity to get to know each other rather than carry out the program with existing groups. The system of mixing scouts from various branches and troops did not impact negatively on feelings of pride for one's own troop. Jamboree 1987 demonstrated that Plast has a lot of engaged Ukrainian youth and showed that working with them is a worthwhile endeavor. At the same time, we saw that there are large numbers of scouts, former scouts, and members of *Plast-pryiat* who care about the success of Plast and are ready to help" (Orest Dzulynsky).

### *Boy and girl scout division (UPU)*

During this period, and in between international jamborees, scout camps alternated between troop-organized local and KPT national camps. In 1976, the Olympic year in Montreal, a KPT took place in Quebec, culminating in two days of attendance at the Games, an all-Ukrainian youth rally in Montreal, and a memorable dance with music performed by future Juno Award winner Luba.

Because of the emergence of smaller Plast branches, the formation of co-ed troops was initiated, and approved at an international level. In 1984, the first of these was inaugurated in Ottawa as Troop #101, followed in due course by co-ed Troop #102 in Calgary.

Loss of interest in Plast activities on the part of older boy and girl scouts became an issue. Noting that the span of years as a boy or girl scout



*First permanent co-ed scout troop in Plast, #101 «Volodymyr Ivasiuk», Ottawa, established 1984. Photo includes scout leaders (front row) Oleh Kandyba, Oksana Migus, Plast Chief Scout Yuriy Starosolsky, Lydia Reshitnyk, Volodymyr Piaseckyj, and (back row) Mykhailo Loza, Bohdanna Horich Cmoc, and Lubomyr Chabursky.*

in the UPU division—from 11 to 18 years of age—was perhaps too long, an experiment was launched in Toronto, organizing boy and girl scouts aged 16 to 18 into a separate division; its activity program was more flexible and largely project-based. The co-ed troop consisting of five patrols held its own camp in 1985, but the arrangement did not last beyond 1986. The main objective of retaining more older boy and girl scouts by creating a new division was not successful, but the project-based approach eventually trickled into the UPU division curriculum for higher-rank scouts.

### *Rover-rank scout division (USP)*

The rover-rank scout division was the source of most Plast scout leaders, but it lacked a program for those who were not involved in this kind of work. In 1984, the KPS initiated a series of ideological seminars for the USP; they were hosted by the Toronto branch at its *Plastova Sich* camp over the May long weekend. There were 34 USP members at the first seminar; at the second, in May 1985, over 60 took part. A variety of topics was addressed: Ukrainian refugees from Poland, Valentyn Moroz and dissidents, multiculturalism, pluralism, Holodomor, and the Deschênes Commission. Subsequent seminars were held in May 1987 and May 1988. In December 1987, a seminar-type program was organized at a ski camp

led by Ivan Wynnycykj. Called “Ski and Think,” after a day’s skiing, a further three hours were devoted to the seminar program. The USP seminar was revived in May 1992, but by then Ukraine had become independent and the discussions became centered on the relationship between Plast in Canada and in Ukraine in the context of their joint projects.

### *Scout-seniors division (UPS)*

Members of the scout-seniors division were active in leadership posts in Plast branches as well as national and international organizational structures. Besides the branch-based divisions, the scout-seniors fraternities and sororities fostered networks not only for social purposes but also in support of Plast program implementation. With their varied specializations and interests, they were particularly helpful for large-scale events such as specialty wilderness camping (hiking, climbing, canoeing, sailing, etc.) as well as the national and international jamborees.

### *Finances and economic issues*

Thanks to the planning and efforts of the initial years, Plast in Canada achieved a comfortable level of financial stability. Several endowment funds were set up: a publications fund, a National Plast Fund for program needs, and a special DROT Fund to pay travel costs for scout leaders attending training courses. The main source of regular financing continued to be membership dues, which were determined and collected by the branches, with per-member deductions going to the national budget. Thus, they financed the operational budget of the national executive, including the administration office, general meetings, scout leadership training (development and implementation), and membership in CUPO, as well as dues to the UCC and SKVU. As a matter of policy, Plast Canada did not pay its scout leaders, scoutmasters, or executive members.

In this period, grants from the Canadian government were readily available for specific projects, and became a reliable source of income for the organization. Plast also continued to benefit from the generosity of persons who helped by generously donating their money and time.

### *Plast and the community*

Plast had been a member of the UCC since 1953. At the end of the 1970s, however, its structure was proving to be unworkable and undemocratic. According to its charter, not all UCC members had the



*Plast member contingent among the delegates to the 15th UCC Congress, representing a number of Ukrainian Canadian organizations besides Plast, Winnipeg, 1986.*

right to sit on the Executive; in fact, youth organizations such as Plast were excluded. Other anomalies were revealed; for example, in 1978 the head of the Youth Committee was a member of the Union of Canadian Veterans. This lack of youth representation was a serious problem for Plast. In 1980, Plast's representative to the UCC, Sophia Kachor, declared that Plast should insist on changes to the UCC structure, to make it more accessible to young people. It took 12 years and a few congresses, but Plast won at the end, from 1992 it has been playing a constructive role in the UCC.

In 1975, Plast answered the call of skvU to take part in the "Day of Solidarity" initiative—a protest action against the arrests and repression of dissidents in Ukraine. That year, Plast Canada's operating motto was "Ukraine is Calling You," the aim of which was to kindle a feeling of duty towards Ukraine. Adult Plast members became involved in developing a strong definition of what rights should be guaranteed in support of the languages and cultures of Canada's minority groups.<sup>10</sup> Every year, on January 12, Plast members would take part in a one-day hunger strike to turn the world's attention to Ukraine in the Soviet Union. Such hunger strikes were initiated by Viacheslav Chornovil, an imprisoned Ukrainian dissident who encouraged others to join him. Food money thus saved was donated to the skvU's Committee on Human Rights.

In addition to playing an active role in the SKVU as an organization, individual Canadian Plast scout-seniors accepted positions on the SKVU executive. Plast members who served as SKVU presidents included Rev. Wasyl Kushnir from Winnipeg (first president), Mykola Plawiuk from Montreal (1978–81), and Peter Savaryn from Edmonton (1983–88).

In order to raise the profile of Plast and better inform parents and the community about it, a manual titled *Plast dlia batkiv* (Plast for Parents), by longtime junior scout leader Ivan Franiw, was published in 1978. In the mid-1980s, information seminars were also organized for parents of junior scouts and those considering sending their children to Plast.

In the years 1975–90, members of Plast continued their activism in leadership roles in the Ukrainian community. Adult scouts were heavily engaged in community projects and organizations, often taking part in initiatives to protect the Ukrainian name in Canadian society. One example of this was the issue of the “Map of World Languages.”

The Official Languages Bureau of Canada published a language map of the world for children 13 to 17 years of age, and distributed it to schools and libraries. The only language noted for the entire USSR was Russian. The reaction in the Ukrainian community was swift: a demand that the Bureau publish a correction. The response received from the Bureau was that “within 5 months the world map of languages will be corrected and republished, with the same number of copies and as an original edition. The special corrections will include the following: Ukraine, the Baltic countries and Belarus will be done in separate colours and their names will be printed on their territories.” The head of the Bureau stated, “The protest campaign of the Ukrainian and other communities was superbly effective and professional, and had a wide reach.”

A second example of political activity within the Ukrainian community was the question of the “Deschênes Commission,” a Canadian government commission that in 1985/86 investigated accusations of “war crimes” against Ukrainians, particularly the Galicia Division, during WWII. The Commission not only provoked the indignation of the Ukrainian community but also elicited a defense—protests, testimony of witnesses—of the good name of Ukrainians. The protest actions were joined by rover-rank scouts who went to Ottawa and set up meetings with every MP in order to inform them about the truthful role of Ukrainians in WWII.

In 1981 the KPS, under the leadership of Daria Darewych, began sponsoring Ukrainian youth from Poland who, because of the Communist repressions and the state of emergency declared in Poland, applied for refugee status and were living in a camp in Austria. (At that time, Can-



ada admitted political refugees who had sponsors under a so-called “self-exile program.”) Plast branches in Toronto, Kitchener, and Edmonton guaranteed to provide sponsorship for 25 young persons, and the *Lisovi Mavky* sorority organized a fundraising walkathon. This Plast initiative encouraged other Ukrainian organizations, and as a result, a significant number of Ukrainians were able to emigrate from Poland to Canada.

In 1982, a group of Plast members formed the Famine Research Committee in Toronto, headed by Wasyl Janischewsky (who later became head of the НРВ). In 1984, the committee produced the film *Harvest of Despair*—the first documentary film about the Holodomor. It awakened the conscience of the world to this Ukrainian tragedy. When political changes began in the USSR in 1989, Plast in Toronto initiated the formation of the Canadian Committee of Friends of Rukh (a democratic movement in Ukraine), whose first head was scout-senior Erast Huculak.

### *Summary*

For Plast in Canada, the years 1975 to 1990, on the threshold of Ukraine’s independence, were a period of accelerated ambitious activity, on the one hand, and a struggle with challenges over which Plast had no control, on the other. Demographically, the postwar population boom had ended, and Plast membership declined. Moreover, children who came to register in Plast often had only a weak command of the Ukrainian language.

However, the leadership positions were occupied by persons born or brought up in Canada, who were not limited by “how it was before,” and who were ready to try new methods, experiment, and attempt ambitious projects. They knew how to apply for and obtain government funding, including for camping grants, not only on their own sites but throughout Canada and even in Germany and Europe. As well, they understood that decentralization was needed, that branches had to have a larger role in making national decisions.

When the declining language retention threatened to paralyze Plast, the new leadership created new programs and applied methods to foster motivation for using the Ukrainian language. When older boy and girl scouts and adult *plastuny* began to lose interest in Plast activities, the new generation of leaders instituted programs which spoke to them differently.

And when at the end of this period Plast in Ukraine was reborn, the new leadership understood their duty and with eagerness and enthusiasm took to playing a role in this rebirth.

### KPS presidents in Canada, 1951–2010

Until 1951, the official head of Plast in Canada was Rev. Volodymyr Ivashko, appointed leader-designate by the HPS in Germany. A KPR was chosen on 20 April 1950, and the KPS national executive was thereafter elected by delegates at KPZ general meetings, first held triennially, and biennially after 1965.

I KPZ	1 Sep 1951	Omelan Tarnavskij
II KPZ	10–11 Oct 1953	Tsiopa Palijiw
III KPZ	22–24 Dec 1956	Tsiopa Palijiw
IV KPZ	25–26 Dec 1959	Omelan Tarnavskij
V KPZ	5–7 Oct 1962	Tsiopa Palijiw
VI KPZ	17–18 Apr 1965	Mykola Switucha
VII KPZ	23–24 Dec 1967	Wasyl Janischewsky
VIII KPZ	26–27 Dec 1969	Wasyl Janischewsky
IX KPZ	27–28 Nov 1971	Roman Wrzesnewskij
X KPZ	22–23 Dec 1973	Roman Wrzesnewskij
XI KPZ	27–28 Dec 1975	Bohdan Pendzey
XII KPZ	4–5 Feb 1978	Daria Darewych
XIII KPZ	1–2 Mar 1980	Daria Darewych
XIV KPZ	27–28 Feb 1982	Iroida Wynnyckyj
XV KPZ	3–5 Feb 1984	Iroida Wynnyckyj
XVI KPZ	21–23 Mar 1986	Iroida Wynnyckyj
	May 1987	Orest Dzulynsky
XVII KPZ	26 Feb 1988	Orest Dzulynsky
XVIII KPZ	24–25 Feb 1990	Orest Dzulynsky
XIX KPZ	29 Feb–1 Mar 1992	Tanya Dzulynsky
XX KPZ	26–27 Feb 1994	Tanya Dzulynsky
XXI KPZ	24–25 Feb 1996	T. Dzulynsky and V. Luciw
XXII KPZ	28 Feb–1 Mar 1998	Volodymyr Luciw
XXIII KPZ	26–27 Feb 2000	Volodymyr Luciw
XXIV KPZ	23–24 Feb 2002	Radomir Bilash
XXV KPZ	28–29 Feb 2004	Ann Szyptur
XXVI KPZ	4–5 Mar 2006	Ann Szyptur
XXVII KPZ	1–2 Mar 2008	Ann Szyptur
XXVIII KPZ	6–7 Mar 2010	Roman Mushka



*Presidents of KPS Canada national executives (1965–2002).*

## Rebirth of Plast in Ukraine

At the end of the 1980s, political changes in the USSR opened up opportunities for Ukrainians in Canada to establish direct relations with Ukraine. A meeting that occurred in Toronto between two physics professors with a penchant for political activity led to the beginnings of the rebirth of Plast in Ukraine. In October 1988, Plast leader and theoretical physics professor Jurij Darewych invited a colleague, physicist Ihor Yukhnovsky, from Lviv to Toronto under an academic exchange program. Prof. Yukhnovsky, who was also the Director of the Junior Academy of Sciences in Lviv—an extracurricular program for high school students—expressed curiosity about Ukrainian youth in Canada and learned about Plast. A few months later, a letter arrived from Lviv, inviting Canadian high school students of Ukrainian background to visit Lviv and meet Ukrainian students.

At this time, both the Canadian and international leadership of Plast were cautious concerning official contacts with Ukraine, and decided on a wait-and-see approach. Oksana Zakydalsky, a Plast leader in Toronto, organized a group of 14 boy and girl scouts from Toronto and Montreal, and together with scout leader Taras Gula, went to Ukraine in July 1989. While the Canadians were in Ukraine, the Lviv paper *Leninska molod* featured an article about the Canadian-Ukrainian scouts, and a TV program interviewed the Canadian guests. It soon became obvious



*First two Plast candidates from Ukraine invited to Canada to swear Plast Oath on 1 July 1990 at Baturyn camp, near Montreal: Ihor Hryniv and Orest Shot, with Oles Kryskiv at right.*



*Junior scout division leadership training seminar, Plastova Sich camp, 1990. Attending from Ukraine were Halia Potiuk, Olesia Pasichnyk, and Oleh Pokalchuk.*

that there was wide interest in Lviv in Plast, particularly on the part of the municipal youth organization *Tovarystvo Leva*. In the fall of 1989, having been persuaded that the situation in Ukraine was hopeful with respect to further contacts regarding Plast, international Plast leaders organized a meeting in Toronto with several national Plast organizations, at which it was decided that Plast would organize leadership training courses and exchanges with young people in Ukraine in order to promote the rebirth of Plast.

From 1990 onwards, Plast in Canada played a significant and very active role in this process. When Plast was officially registered in Lviv in February 1990 (this was, in fact, well before independence), KPS Canada sent invitations to two members of *Tovarystvo Leva* to Canada for Plast leadership training. In June/July Ihor Hryniv and Orest Shot came from Lviv for scout leadership training, while Olesia Pasichnyk and Halya Potiuk took part in the junior scout leader training in August. At the *Zolota Bulava* camp at *Baturyn* in Quebec, on 1 July 1990, Ihor Hryniv and Orest Shot took the Plast Oath before Canada's head of KPS, Orest Dzulynsky. In June 1990, twenty students from the Junior Academy of Lviv came to Canada to complete the second part of their student exchange, and took part in the Plast camp of the Toronto boy and girl scout troops at the Bon Echo Provincial Park. In the following years, numerous exchanges took place between the *plastuny* of Ukraine and Canada, which had an important influence on post-Soviet Ukraine. In 1993, under the sponsorship of the Canadian KPS and with financial aid from CIDA, Orest and Tanya Dzulynsky, assisted by the Ternopil branch, held a *Zolota Bulava* leadership camp in Ukraine, with a mixed Canadian-Ukrainian staff of scout leaders.

Subsequently, many Canadian Plast leaders travelled to Ukraine to assist with the Plast revival and the planning and implementation of various programs. A special role was played by those who were staying long-term in Ukraine. Notable among them was Oksana Wynnnycky, who organized the first junior scout leader training in Lviv in 1990; and Ksenia Maryniak, who lived in Ukraine for several years, represented Plast at the First (I) World Forum of Ukrainians in 1992 in Kyiv.

Other initiatives in which *plastuny* from Canada took part: in July 1993, Motria Onyschuk helped to organize a junior scout camp near Staryi Sambir, Lviv oblast (about 80 children); Katrusia Haras was a scout leader at the SH-B camp, with Orest Haras as an observer; and Evhen Duvalko headed the L-SH camp. In 1995, Plast obtained a grant from the Canadian government's "Partnership Canada Ukraine" program to fund projects in Ukraine. The first three took place in July 1995: a seminar for junior scout division leaders to organize leadership training courses (15 participants); training of junior scout pack leaders (20 participants); and training of junior scout den leaders (34 participants). The organizers and instructors were Tania Onyschuk, Oles Slywynskyj, Christine Zeltway, and Sophia Kachor from Canada, partnered with KPS Ukraine.

Another project funded by the government program in 1995 was a camp called *Vuzol* in Dnipropetrovsk oblast, organized by Canadian *plastuny* with the help of four rover-rank scouts from Lviv and host organization Skif, the Dnipropetrovsk oblast scouting association.



*Yarema Luciw (in the middle, wearing an embroidered Ukrainian shirt) with Plast Ukraine delegation at Scout Jamboree in the Netherlands, 1995. Sitting in front of him is Jacques Moreillon, Secretary General of the wosm.*



*Scout leaders from Ukraine at a leadership training seminar, Plastova Sich camp, Grafton, Ontario, 1995.*

The scouts participating in the camp were members of various scouting groups of eastern Ukraine, as well as Plast. Canadian organizers Oksana Zakydalsky, Danylo Darewych, Jurij Kruk, and Ksenia Maryniak were joined by Oksana Smerechuk during the camp.

That same year the Canada KPS enabled the participation of Yarema Luciw from Toronto at the 18th International Scout Jamboree in the Netherlands, as a member of the delegation from independent Ukraine, attending an international scout jamboree for the first time.

In 1996, four scout leaders from Canada organized a series of “train-the-trainer” workshops for Ukrainian leadership training instructors, which were implemented by a joint Canadian-Ukrainian task force. Being a joint venture allowed the workshop to benefit from feedback provided on concepts, methods, and strategy. Plast Canada, in turn, also benefited because such projects stimulated them to rethink their programs and methods, organize their training materials, and gain new experience.

In 1997, the Canadian granting agency allowed seven members of the Ukrainian KPS a two-week stay in Canada to attend a program development conference. In order to acquaint the *plastuny* from Ukraine with a large scouting organization besides diaspora Plast, a two-day seminar was organized for them at Scouts Canada, who explained their own organizational structure and functions. That year, a national jamboree of Scouts Canada was taking place, and their national executive arranged for invitations to the jamboree for two of the Plast representatives from Ukraine.

In 1999, Canada sent Andrea Figol from Toronto to the World Scout Jamboree in Chile as part of the Plast delegation from Ukraine. The first years of the rebirth of Plast in Ukraine were exciting and moving, and these first contacts laid the foundation for long-term cooperation.

### *Activities*

The attention of Plast Canada was not focused exclusively on Plast issues in Ukraine. Although 1991 was the year of independence and a landmark referendum in Ukraine, for *plastuny* in Canada it was also the 100th anniversary of the arrival of Ukrainian settlers to Canada. To mark this anniversary, the KPS organized a KPT camp in Alberta titled *Pioneer Trails*, in the province where the pioneers first settled. The camp program included several days in the Rockies, participation in the broader centennial celebrations, a visit to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village provincial museum, and camping among the wild bison in Elk Island National Park.

In 1992, Plast Canada scouts attended the celebrations in the USA to mark the 80th anniversary of Plast. An exhibit on the history of Plast at the international jamboree, prepared by Sophia Hewryk and the *Pershi Stezhi* sorority, later came to Canada and was shown at many Plast branches.

In 1998, the 50th anniversary of Plast in Canada was celebrated at an international jamboree in Manitoba, which also marked the 85th anniversary of Plast's founding. There were 654 scouts and leaders camping throughout Manitoba for the first 10 days, and a total of 896 Plast members—not only from Canada and USA, but also Argentina, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine—attended the festivities near Winnipeg.



*Campfire at 1998 Plast 50th anniversary jamboree in Manitoba. Leading the singing is Andriana Chuchman, the future Metropolitan opera singer.*



*Dragonboat races at the '98 UMPZ in Manitoba.*

In 2000, the junior scout division marked its 75th anniversary. A special issue of the junior scout magazine *Hotuis!* was published, and as a special project in Canada, a junior scout quilted banner was created. Every junior scout pack sewed a square, and the squares were then sewn together to create the banner, which was exhibited at all Plast branches.

Camping activities continued to develop and were characterized by their great variety. Every two years, local troop-based camps continued to be held, and in the in-between years, KPT camps were organized alternately with jamborees. In 2000, the Ottawa Plast branch organized a KPT for UPU scouts at a camping site near Ottawa belonging to the Franco-Canadian scouts. In 2004, a national camp titled “Know Your Country” was held in various regions of Canada, and in 2009 a KPT national camp was organized in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. The KPS endeavours to ensure that every Plast boy and girl scout has the opportunity to attend a mountaineering camp in the Rockies at least once in their UPU career, as the mountains are one of the wonders of the natural world and every Canadian *plastun* should experience them.

### *Organization*

In the early 21st century, new requirements with respect to organizations in Canada took effect, as well as more stringent insurance and tax regulations. The demands varied according to the province in which Plast branches were located, and according to their real property assets—some had their own buildings and camping sites, others only a building, and still others conducted their activities in community-owned premises. In any case, the KPS decided that it was time to update the Plast Charter, which had been registered in 1978, and to clearly delineate the responsibilities between the individual branches and the national executive. An ad hoc committee began its work in 2000, and in 2005, a new Charter was adopted. Each Plast branch in Canada became a legal entity (if it wasn’t already), while the national charter constituted an agreement between the national organization and each branch separately.

### *Summary*

Although there were always different problems to contend with, and troubling opinions were frequently expressed about the future of Plast in Canada, the organization continued to exist and improve thanks to those who refused to indulge in negativism and remained committed. The dynamism of Plast was assured by encouraging discussions of a





*Commemorative quilted banner, made in Canada to mark the 75th anniversary of the UPN junior scout division.*

philosophical and ideological nature. For example, at the KPZ in 2001, a round table was held that touched on such questions as “Who are we?” “What is assimilation, what is integration?” “Are we real scouts?” and “What is the mission of Plast?”

At the start of the new millennium, Plast grappled with a radically changeable world, obliging it to be constantly ready for change in the direction of its work. Since the independence of Ukraine, the mission to preserve the Ukrainian identity of Plast youth in Canada had taken on a different tone. On the one hand, there was now greater interest in Ukraine, since it had become a tangible place for young people in Canada. News and reports about Ukraine appeared in the Canadian press; travel there was possible and relatively easy. On the other hand, the feeling of duty that had bound Ukrainians in Canada (and other countries of the diaspora) for several generations, to be the guardians of Ukrainian national identity, had lost its urgency.

In the immediate aftermath of 1991, part of Plast found a new role—to help in the rebirth of Plast in the homeland. With time, this function became superfluous, and the organization had now to confront the broader issue of reevaluating the role of Plast in Canada, its relationship to the reborn Ukraine, and its relationship to Plast organizations in other countries.

Ultimately, the future of Plast in Canada will depend on the same factors which formed its history—vision and faith in the Plast ideal, and the desire to pass it on to our youth, among whom will be their children and grandchildren.

## Plast and the Scouting Movement

From the beginning, one of the important issues which faced Plast in Canada was clarification of its relationship to the Association of Boy Scouts of Canada. In the first issue of *Plastovyj visnyk* in 1948, Rev. Ivashko instructed Plast groups to make contact with Canadian scouts. “The existence of newly founded and adequately organized Plast groups should be reported in writing to the nearest local unit of the Canadian Boy Scouts.”

On a local level, good relations were set up between the new Plast groups and Canadian scouting units. At the national level, Plast was under growing pressure to join the Boy Scouts of Canada. But on 9 July 1949, Plast Canada was ordered not to proceed with its registration in the Boy Scouts, because the НРВ (still in Germany at that time) was pursuing an appeal to the WSB in London to obtain special status for Plast.

Although Plast had never been an official member of the world scouting movement, like other Eastern European scouting organizations, Plast wanted to continue its status as “Scouts-in-Exile,” which they received as Displaced Persons. In Canada, consultations occurred between Plast and other scouts-in-exile (Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Poles, Hungarians) to coordinate their actions with respect to the Boy Scouts of Canada. However, attempts to obtain special status were unsuccessful, and the WSB refused Plast’s petition. Ukrainians in Canada then decided to continue their scouting activity, but outside the official scouting movement. In 1967, the Conference of Canadian Ethnic Scouts was founded, and Plast became a member. The Conference had a program of cooperation; for example, on 9–23 August 1968, it organized a hiking camp through Canada, with 60 representatives from the participating scout organizations, 13 Plast members among them.

The relationship between Plast and the international scouting movement continued to be problematic, and although discussions continued, they did not lead to any changes. *Plastuny* took part several times as guests at international scouting events, and in 1963 there was a fundraising campaign in Canada and the US to send a delegation from Plast to the World Jamboree in Greece. The Plast delegation was headed by Mykola Switucha, who later presided over the Canadian KPS (1965–67).

The Boy Scouts of Canada renewed their interest in Plast and other ethnic scouting organizations in the 1980s. Negotiations with Plast were held over several years. In spite of the interest on all sides in cooperation and organizational unity, the issue of retention of a separate national organization again became a barrier. Canadian scouts were willing to accept Plast as a member at the local level, but not willing to let Plast keep its own national structure. There was also a problem in that there would have had to be separate organizations for males and females, because at that time in Canada, the scouting organizations were gender-based: the Boy Scouts of Canada and the Canadian Girl Guides were separate organizational structures, while Plast had always been co-educational at that level. When a World Jamboree took place in Canada in 1983, the KPS sought ways that Plast could be included, but they were not successful.

Parallel to the negotiations with the Boy Scouts, there were meetings with the Girl Guides, as well. For example, in 1970 there were three meetings of ethnic scouting organizations, at the invitation of the Guides head office. There were discussions on cooperation, and Plast female members and other ethnics voluntarily took part in leadership training sessions organized by the Canadian Guides.

In 1976, the Associated International Scout and Guide Organization (AISGO) was formed from scouting organizations that had not joined the Canadian organization nor the World Organization of Scouting Movements (Ukrainian, Estonians, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Latvians, and Poles). The first head office of AISGO was in New York, but in 1981 it was moved to Toronto. In 1983, a joint camp of the members of AISGO was planned in Canada. Plast took part in its preparation and suggested that the camp be held in the form of a jamboree—each national group would have its own sub-camp. But this proposal was not accepted, and it was decided that the jamboree would be made up of mixed scout groups and not separate national camps. No national days were to be held, or separate national presentations. Everything was to be conducted in the English language. In the end, Plast decided not to participate in such camps and to limit joint activities with AISGO to the levels of upper management.

The rebirth of scouting organizations that was taking place in the early 1990s in Ukraine also took place in other countries of post-Communist Europe. The member organizations decided that it was more important for them to develop relations with scouting organizations in their homelands than with each other. The last meeting of the AISGO took place in Toronto on 13 March 1993, and the organization was disbanded.

## *Plast and Scouts Canada revisited*

Thanks to the rebirth of Plast in Ukraine, improved relations between Plast and Scouts Canada led to a reconsideration of the question of Plast's membership in Scouts Canada (renamed from the Association of Boy Scouts of Canada in 1988, it also became a co-educational organization, with both males and females as regular members).

In 2000, discussions began on the national level in Plast about the possibility of Plast's membership in Scouts Canada. The conditions put forward by Scouts Canada this time had changed. They agreed to accept Plast not only as groups at the local level but as a national organization with its existing structure.

Two representatives from Scouts Canada were invited to the xxii КРЗ to explain the position of Scouts Canada with respect to Plast membership. Namely: upon becoming a member, Plast would keep its organizational structure, Ukrainian language, and own uniforms. Plast members would have to pay membership dues to Scouts Canada and take the Scout's Oath. Plast would keep its assets separately. After one year, one or the other side could cancel the membership of Plast in Scouts Canada. The КРЗ passed a resolution "to form a committee to discuss [the membership of Plast in Scouts Canada], and to send the text of the proposal to the branches and ask for their feedback."

In the branch discussions about membership, many feared that Plast would be "lost," i.e., be subsumed, and this seriously impeded the initiative. The issue of possible membership ended at the КРЗ in 2001, when a resolution was adopted "that, at this time, formal discussions about forming an association of Plast with Scouts Canada shall be set aside."

## **Plast Publishing in Canada**

Most of Plast's non-periodical publications came out in Canada, where the offices of the international enterprise Plast Publishing were located. Its largest publishing project, carried out during the first decade of Plast in Canada, was a second edition of the manual of Ukrainian scouting, *Zhyttia v Plasti*, authored by Dr. Oleksander Tysovsky-ДРОТ. The first edition, which had come out in 1921 in Lviv,



needed to be updated, so when DROT came to Canada in 1957 to attend the jubilee jamboree, an editorial board was chosen to work with the author on a new, enlarged manual. The publication was planned for 1962, on the occasion of Plast's 50th anniversary. The editorial board was headed by Tsiopa Palijiw, and the chief editor was Yuriy Piaseckyj. The book came out in 1961—a 551-page manual with cover and illustrations by the prominent Ukrainian artist Myron Levysky. A revised second edition came out in 1963, and a third edition in 1967.

In 1968, the Plai Cooperative in Toronto funded a new edition of *Hahilky* by O. Baran (Lviv 1932), and in 1975 it financed *Mii pershyi slovnyk*, illustrated by Yuriy and Yarko Kozak. In 1970, a manual was published for scoutmasters, *Posibnyk zviazkovoho*, edited by Wasyl Palienko, and in 1978, a parent's primer, Ivan Franiw's *Batkam pro Plast*, was published in Toronto.

In 1976, Plast Publishing was registered as a corporation in Ontario, with Roman Wrzesnewskij as chair of the board of directors. In 1987, through the efforts of the KPS, the songbook *V dorohu* was published—its first edition had been printed in Germany in 1947. The second edition was dedicated to Yuriy Piaseckyj, a member of the editorial board of the first edition and composer of many Plast songs—including the iconic “Pry vatri,” to this day traditionally sung at the close of most Plast campfires.

The 1988 international Plast conference (Congress) passed a motion expressing the need for a new Plast manual for scouts. Tanya Dzulynsky was assigned the responsibility for producing the manual and became the author of *Plastovyi dovidnyk*, which was compiled and printed in Toronto.

Plast Canada also provided input into the development of Plast Publishing and its publication of periodicals. The journal *Plastovyi shliakh* for adult scouts came out variously—at first in Germany, then in the USA, and before being transferred to Ukraine in 1992, it was printed in Toronto. Two of the editors were from Canada: Yuriy Piaseckyj and Volodymyr Sochaniwsky.

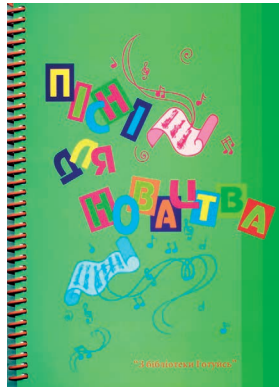


The junior scout division's magazine *Hotuis!* began to come out in New York in 1953 (ed. Lesia Chraplywa). In January 1971 the editorial and printing offices moved to Toronto, and Antonina Horochowych took over editorial responsibility; Oksana Wynnnykyj became editor in 1993.

The first issue of the magazine for boy and girl scouts, *Yunak* was published in 1963, thanks to the cooperation of people in three cities: the editor was Lubomyr Onyshkevych in Boston; the layout was done by Myron Babiuk in Rochester, and printing and distribution were done in Toronto at the Plast Publishing office, headed by Omelan Tarnavskyy. Each KPS was responsible for collecting subscriptions. In 1965 there were 981 subscribers to *Yunak* in the USA, 621 in Canada, 142 in Australia, 73 in Britain, and 24 in Germany, totaling 1,872.

In the 1990s, problems arose with regularity of publication and timely distribution of the magazines. The joint venture USA-Canada

Publishing was created by the two KPS national executives, and it took over responsibility for the publication and distribution of the *Hotuis!* and *Yunak* magazines from the HPB. The cost of the subscriptions was added to the annual membership dues. The UPN's *Hotuis!* was edited by Markian Hawryluk (New York) and



the UPV's *Yunak* was edited by Oksana Zakydalsky (Toronto).

The first meeting of the joint publishing entity was held on 23 September 1994. Computers and programs for desktop publishing were purchased, which meant that the editors would be responsible not only for magazine content, but also its pre-publication layout. The magazines began to come out in 1995. In 2000, Tanya Dzulynsky became the editor of *Hotuis!*, and from that time the editorial work, printing, and administration of both magazines were managed in Canada. Starting in 1998, a Canadian government program for summer employment of students financed the hiring of a summer student for the publishing project, who usually relieved the editors of the task of producing the layouts of the magazines. In 2002, both editors organized a two-day seminar in Toronto for persons interested in helping with the publications.

Several issues of every *Yunak* magazine were sent to all Plast branches and members of the kps in Ukraine. There, a magazine for junior scouts called *Ptashenia* began to come out, and once a year, a joint *Hotuis!-Ptashenia* issue was published, partially financed by Plast Publishing USA-Canada. The magazines continued to be printed by the joint publishing entity, *Yunak* until 2005 and *Hotuis!* until 2010. Materials from both magazines were then transferred to the Plast Canada website.



*100 rokiv plastovoi idei (100 Years of the Plast Idea)—a film commissioned by the Toronto branch for its celebration of Plast’s centenary in 2012. Producer Tanya Dzulynsky, technical director Yuriy Luhovy.*

## APPENDIX—Plast Canada branches

### Winnipeg

Winnipeg is at the geographic center of Canada, on the eastern border of the Canadian prairie and western edge of the Canadian Shield. It could be said that everything connected to Plast in Canada began in Winnipeg. Immediately after the arrival of Rev. Ivashko, the leader-designate for Canada, on 1 March 1948, he organized the founding Plast meeting, and Winnipeg became officially the first city with a Plast presence in Canada. On 19 April 1948 the first Plast city branch was organ-

ized in Winnipeg. The following year, on 8 May 1949, the first Spring Fest was held, and in March 1950, the local scout-seniors held the first leadership training course. In July 1951, the Winnipeg branch organized its first girl scout's camp, called "*Khortytsia*," and first junior girl scout's camp. Ivan Zelsky became the head of the first *Plast-pryiat* in Canada. Boy scout camps and junior boy scout camps began the following year, in July 1952, and 16 *Plast* members from Minneapolis arrived for a visit.

In 1953, Winnipeg organized a "year of external contacts" to encourage active participation in community events, and that year *Plast* purchased shares in premises to be jointly used by *Plast* and a preschool. In June 1954 it began construction of *Plast* barracks for camping on site at the Ukrainian Catholic eparchy's Ukrainian Park Campground on Lake Winnipeg (Camp Morton, MB). In 1955, Winnipeg hosted the first national *Plast* gathering in Canada.

In the initial years, it was not straightforward to realize a camping program. Ivan Zelsky wrote: "Before then (1951), no other Ukrainian organization in Manitoba had organized camps for youth. Camping for Ukrainian young people was something new in the local terrain, and *Plast* was a pioneer in starting it. The parents of *Plast* youth did not yet feel comfortable with the regular camp program, and knew nothing about the local territory. Some of them were afraid of attacks on the camp. It was necessary to calm the parents and persuade them."

Furthermore, "*Plast* had almost no camping equipment. One or two tents, a few pots. Everything had to be set up, and for everything money and a lot of hard work were needed on the part of both *Plast* and the *Plast-pryiat*. One should remember that in 1951, nobody owned a car, or a house telephone. Almost all communication among ourselves was on foot. But with a lot of work from *Plast* and *Plast-pryiat* leadership, all the difficulties were overcome, and the camp was held at the beginning of July 1951, in a park in the vicinity of Beausejour."

Winnipeg *stanytsia* is the home of: junior boy scout Pack #1 «Lisovi zviru» and junior girl scout Pack #8 «Krylati»; boy scout Troop #7 «Sviatoslav Zavoiovnyk» and girl scout Troop #2 «Kniahynia Olha».

Winnipeg	1951	1997
Junior scouts	77	52
Girl & boy scouts	30	53
Rover-rank scouts	29	27
Scout-seniors	27	50
Total	163	185



## Edmonton

Early Plast patrols were established in Edmonton and Myrnam in 1932–33. After WWII, the first patrol in Edmonton was formed by four girl scouts who had been in Plast together in Germany and Austria—Marta Batytska (Lyshak), Olha Mykytiv (Shewchuk), Maria Rosliak (Dytyniak), and Zoriana Yavorska (Soldan), under the leadership of Ivan Pshoniak; they reported to the Plast leader-designate for Canada. As other Plast members arrived in Edmonton, they also reported to the local detachment of Boy Scouts of Alberta, and formed two patrols. On their left shoulder they wore a badge labelled “Ukrainian Scout Association.” This unique arrangement continued until 1951.

The first general meeting of the Edmonton Plast branch took place on 14 November 1948, with Pshoniak elected president. By 1950, the *stanytsia* had organized a library, an orchestra, and a theatrical drama club. For decades, its archives have been professionally maintained by Nadia Cyncar.

Camping also began in 1950: a three-week camp for girl scouts, a junior scout camp with 33 campers under the guidance of Ihor (Iko) Stecura, a camp for boy scouts on 10–15 August under the direction of Myron Stefaniw, and a rover-rank scout camp led by Peter Savaryn. In 1953 this land-locked *stanytsia* held a “marine camp,” with the boy scouts sailing their own boat which they had built at great cost and effort.

The Edmonton branch set up a building committee in December 1958 and purchased a house in September 1960. In 1971, a Lutheran church building was purchased and deconsecrated to serve as a new Plast House. It was severely damaged by fire in January 1987; the branch president, Andrij Hornjatkevyč, reported, “Even here we proved



*Plast Edmonton executive members, along with visiting former branch president, Chief Scout Lubomyr Romankiw, unveil 60th anniversary badge at a ceremony in City Hall, 2008. L to R: Anna Slevinsky (president), Markian Lazurko, Xenia Skrypnyk-Bubel, Andrij Hornjatkevyč, Slavka Shulakewych, Romankiw, Yarema Shulakewych, and two of the original branch members, Ivan Stadnyk and Myron “Mima” Stefaniw.*

that what our song says is true: ‘we don’t worry about harm nor misadventures.’ We lost only one week of activities and rebuilt it.”

Members of the Edmonton Plast branch have been key figures in the city and province’s civic and community life. The first Holodomor monument in the world was erected at Edmonton City Hall in 1983, to mark the 50th anniversary of the genocidal famine. In 1976, thanks in great part to the efforts of P. Savaryn, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies was founded at the University of Alberta; (along with a similar institute at Harvard) it was instrumental in upholding Ukrainian academic scholarship in the free world prior to Ukraine gaining independence in 1991.

In the summer of 1966, the Edmonton branch hosted a national gathering in Jasper National Park. From 3 to 18 August 1978, the branch welcomed over 1,400 *plastuny* and guests at a UMPZ, which was over three times the numbers initially expected, showing that there was great interest in mountaineering in the Rockies. Since then, the Edmonton Plast branch has organized and hosted numerous national and international camps and jamborees. And it was briefly home to the only KPS executive outside of Toronto in the history of Plast in Canada to date.

The original 1948 girl scout patrol was called «Dniprova Chaika»; they went on to establish Troop #6 «Uliana Kravchenko». The first boy scout patrol was the «Karpatski Orly», among whose members was Romankiw, the future Chief Scout; the boys’ troop was officially founded on 22 October 1967 as #13 «Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny». The two junior scout packs are #6 «Pratsiovyti» for girls and #9 «Lisove tsarstvo» for boys. The Edmonton stanytsia continues to thrive thanks to successfully integrating fourth- and fifth-wave immigrant families into its membership.



*Place setting for Edmonton branch’s Plast 100 Gala Banquet, which included souvenir custom-made embossed leather kerchief rings (shliufky).*

<b>Edmonton</b>	1951	1997
Junior scouts	50	32
Girl & boy scouts	34	42
Rover-rank scouts	28	2
Scout-seniors	7	57
Total	119	133

## Toronto

While the first Plast branch and headquarters of the postwar émigré Plast leader-designate for Canada were in Winnipeg, once the head office was transferred, Toronto became the seat of the KPS and (from 1951) the largest branch in Canada.

The founding meeting of Toronto Plast was organized by Andriy Charak on 4 April 1948, with Bohdan Hawrylyshyn elected as chair and Sofia Yarmoluk (Skrypnyk) as recording secretary. On 23 May 1948, the inaugural meeting of the Toronto branch was held; Charak was elected president, Hawrylyshyn as scoutmaster for boys, and Lida Wachnianyn as scoutmaster for girls. *Plast-pryiat* was organized in Toronto on 5 July 1948, with mostly prewar immigrants as members, who were encouraged by Charak to support the new organization.

Until the branch acquired its own camping site, it was able to rely on the generosity of others for summer camp locations: the Basilian Fathers in Grimsby, the Studite monks in Woodstock, and individual Ukrainian farmers. The first camp was organized in 1949, a co-ed junior scout camp under the direction of Antonina Horochowych, with 12 participants.

Weekly Plast activities were first held in the UNF National Home, on various days of the week in order to manage the sharing of the premises. In January 1951, the Toronto Plast branch was the first in history to acquire its own building; a second one was purchased in 1953, and in 1958, when the majority of the postwar immigrants had achieved a sounder material base and the branch had increased in number, a search committee was set up to find a larger and more representative building for Plast in Canada (given that it housed both the Toronto branch and the KPS). All Plast members in Canada took part in the fundraising.

In 1953, the Toronto Plast branch purchased a farm in Grafton—a large tract on the shore of Lake Ontario, with its own woods; it was named *Plastova Sich*. To finance its purchase, part of the farm was divided into 145 lots, which were sold to Plast families. Not having any start-up capital, in this way the branch gained a camping site and created a new recreational area for members of the Ukrainian community. A chapel, designed by Iko Stecura, was sanctified there in 1964.



*From right: Bohdan Kolos and Ann Szyptur, directors of the 2007 UMPZ, accept financial support from Andrey Genyk-Berezowsky and Luba Tarapacky of Plast Toronto for the jamboree held at the Toronto stanytsia's campsite, Plastova Sich.*

The Toronto branch hosts international jamborees at *Plastova Sich*. The first was held in 1957, with 1,200 participating scouts from Canada and USA, and 3,000 guests; other UMPZ were held in 1987 and 2007. Starting in 1965, sports camps were held there every few years. Sports teams were organized by the branch, including hockey (1971–73) and track and field (from 1960), which took part in North American Ukrainian meets in Toronto and Soyuzivka. The most successful team were the «Vedmedyky», which began to compete in the women’s volleyball league in 1962 and won the junior national championship in 1965 and 1966 in Vancouver. (Interestingly, of the 12 *plastunky* athletes on the team, 7 were named Khrystia.)

In the area of social services, Toronto Plast took part in the annual tag day “Sunflower Day.” Donations collected were given to the Ukrainian Canadian Social Services agency, as the largest charitable project of the branch. In 1952–97 the branch operated an Aid Section, which first helped the postwar Ukrainian refugees who had remained in Germany; in the second half of the 1960s, aid was sent to Ukrainian returnees from the gulags who had resettled in Poland, and from 1972, aid was sent through Poland to Ukraine, to the repressed Ukrainian intelligensia.

In the 1970s, “Reach for the Top” competitions (based on a TV game show for high school teams) took place for the Toronto branches of youth organizations—Plast, SUM and ODUM.

Until 1970, the Toronto Plast branch was the second-largest in the world in terms of numbers, and from 1970 until the rebirth of Plast in Ukraine, it was the largest branch in the world. At the end of the 1960s, it had four packs of junior boy scouts, three packs of junior girl scouts, five troops of boy scouts, and four troops of girl scouts.

Currently, the Toronto *stanytsia* is home to junior boy scouts Pack #5 «Molodi lytsari» and Pack #7 «Karpatski zvir»; junior girl scouts Pack #2 «Pereletni ptytsi» and Pack #10 «Vesniani kvitky»; boy scouts Troop #3 «Symon Petliura» and Troop #11 «Severyn Levytsky»; and girl scouts Troop #4 «Lesia Ukrainka» and Troop #10 «Olha Kosach».



Winners of Orlykiada '98 competitions Ivanka Slywynskij and Yarema Beley.

<b>Toronto</b>	1949	1951	1953	1956	1959	1962
Junior scouts	14	103	182	124	157	214
Girl & boy scouts	33	73	91	167	177	166
Rover-rank scouts	22	76	97	44	55	72
Scout-seniors	35	61	55	89	66	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>525</b>



*Major donors to Plast: Erast & Dolores Huculak generously donated an imposing building (pictured above) to the Plast city branch in Toronto in 2010.*



*Major donors to Plast: Ihor Ihnatowycz & Marta Witer donated generously to sponsor new buildings at the Toronto branch's Plastova Sich camp.*

<b>Toronto</b>	1967	1974	1977	1990	1994	1997
Junior scouts	153	172	121	178	239	222
Girl & boy scouts	248	321	310	153	176	185
Rover-rank scouts	88	211	125	40	105	49
Scout-seniors	76	90	88	111	133	126
Total	689	794	652	482	653	582

## Montreal

The first Plast group in Montreal, comprising 12 boy and girl scouts, was formed on 13 July 1948 as a co-ed scout patrol. The first general meeting of the branch took place on 2 January 1949, with Volodymyr Kmetik elected president. A building was purchased in November 1954, and the *Baturyn* camp in the Laurentians, 115 kilometers from Montreal in the Eastern Townships (Cantons de l'Est), was purchased on 27 November 1959. The property was financed by selling lots to Plast families, and developed thanks to the efforts of *Plast-pryiat*.

Montreal Plast branch's first summer camp was held 16–17 July 1949 on the *Ukraina* property of St. Michael parish; the first junior scout camp at *Baturyn*, “Under the Green Maple,” was held in July 1962. A chapel, designed by Myron Monczak, was built there in 1978 and consecrated to Sts Volodymyr and Olha. Plast Canada's scout leadership camps (ROV and ZB) are often held there.

Blessed with excellent nearby ski resorts, the Montreal Plast branch established a popular tradition of hosting winter camps. The first ski camp, with 13 participants and led by Mykola Switucha, was held in 1956 at the *Vorokhta* site near Lake Memphremagog (owned at the time by a Mr. Teleshevskyj). Ski camps became an annual event, held either at Val David or Ste. Agathe, and later even north of Montreal, attracting participants from all across Canada and the US, with sometimes up to 50 adult scouts attending.



*Chapel of Sts Volodymyr and Olha at camp Baturyn (1978, architect Myron Monczak).*



*Montreal Plast branch's Baturyn camp hosts many local, national, international, and leadership training camps, including ZB (1990).*

Montreal *stanytsia* is the home of junior boy scout Pack #3 «Khloptsy zelenoho boru» and junior girl scout Pack #4 «Ptashata»; boy scout Troop #1 «Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky», founded in 1951, and girl scout Troop #8 «Kniahynia Romanova», founded in 1959. Political events in the province of Quebec in 1979 and the consequent economic stagnation resulted in the negligible growth of Plast in Montreal.

<b>Montreal</b>	1951	1997
Junior scouts	78	97
Girl & boy scouts	29	38
Rover-rank scouts	32	21
Scout-seniors	10	32
Total	149	189

## *Hamilton*

In Hamilton, a group of junior girl scouts was organized in 1941 by Lida Wachnianyn; in November 1948, at the initiative of Bohdan Mykolyn, a Plast group was formed—6 scout-seniors, 6 rover-rank

scouts, 2 boy scouts, 7 junior girl scouts, and 3 junior boy scouts. After the arrival of Mykola Plawiuk in 1955, the group was registered as a branch, and in the years 1955–59, Plawiuk was its president. Meetings and activities in 1958–59 were held at Holy Spirit parish, from 1959 to 1969 at the Ukrainian National Federation premises, and from 1969 again at Holy Spirit parish.

At the beginning, Hamilton scouts took part in the Toronto branch camps. Their own first camp took place in 1955, on land belonging to the Basilian Fathers, with 118 participants. These camps continued from 1958 to 1965, and after that, the Hamilton *plastuny* were joined by scouts from St. Catharines branch. In addition, almost every year Hamilton scouts would take part in camps at *Novyi Sokil* (Buffalo), *Baturyn* (Montreal), or *Plastova Sich* (Toronto).

*Plast-pryiat* was active at this branch under the direction of N. Skab. The auxiliary underwent several difficult years with a lack of leaders; during that time, the whole weight of operations fell on two persons: Milia and Mykola Rubashewsky. At the end of the 1960s, the branch started to languish, and the KPS re-registered Hamilton as a group, under the guidance of Zenon Kobylansky. It again became a branch in 1976, under the leadership of Stepan Shpak and, later, Tamara Dudko. The Hamilton Plast scouts organized some of their activities together with SUM. Almost all the boy and girl scouts were members of the Chaika dance group.

During the years 1995–99, the scouts from Hamilton benefitted from the fact that some Plast leaders were studying at McMaster University in the city. Also, for five years rover-rank scout Danylo Darewych drove from Toronto to Hamilton weekly to lead scout activities.

The Hamilton *stanytsia* is home to the junior boy scout patrol «Tyhry» and junior girl101 scout patrol «Horobchyky». Troop #18 «Olha Basarab» had its banner consecrated on 27 February 1983; at some point it functioned as a co-ed troop, with both boys' and girls' patrols.

Hamilton	1951	1956	1997
Junior scouts	12	64	8
Girl & boy scouts	20	15	16
Rover-rank scouts	4	12	1
Scout-seniors	2	4	8
Total	38	95	33



## Ottawa

Throughout the years, Canada's capital city has been a temporary residence for many who move there to work or study. During their time in Ottawa, Plast members have contributed to the branch, working alongside a small core of dedicated locals, including Julia Woychyshyn, Oleh Kandyba, Marta Chewpa, Nadia Kazymyra Dzioba, Modest Cmoc, and Volodymyr Piaseckyj.

A Plast group was formed in Ottawa on 10 March 1948, led by Ivanna Chudyk; it did not exist long. In 1960, a Plast group made up of two junior boy scout dens was revived and led by Luba Kachan. In 1965 the group became a branch, with *Plast-pryiat* looking after the administration, thus playing a key role in its revival. For years, Maria and Dmytro Reshitnyk made their hotel available for Plast events.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Ottawa Plast actively took part in demonstrations and initiatives connected with the defense of dissidents and political prisoners in Soviet Ukraine. In the years 1967, 1987, and 2007 this branch hosted scouts attending UMPZ international jamborees which took place in the region. In 2000, the branch welcomed scouts from a KPT national camp that was taking place near Ottawa at the camping site of francophone scouts. Its own troop camps have often taken advantage of the close proximity of the Montreal city branch and its *Baturyn* camp, as well as the Algonquin Provincial Park.

Ottawa *stanytsia* is the home of co-ed scout Troop #101 «Volodymyr Ivasiuk», registered in 1984; it also has a junior co-ed den called «Dykyi Lis» (both are intermittently active).

<b>Ottawa</b>	1951	1997
Junior scouts	4	29
Girl & boy scouts	0	30
Rover-rank scouts	7	11
Scout-seniors	3	22
Total	14	92

## St. Catharines

On 22 June 1948, Bohdan Jaciw organized the first den of junior boy scouts in St. Catharines, «Medvedi», and that fall Ivanka Dumyn



*40th anniversary of St. Catharines branch, in front of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, 10 June 2000.*

organized a junior girl scout den, «Holubka». This group was short-lived, and ceased to exist when Jaciw left St. Catharines in 1950.

In 1960, the group was revived thanks to Mykola Rubashewsky. At first, scout leaders from the Hamilton branch helped with the program, traveling every week to lead Plast meetings until newly arrived scout-seniors took over. Then two girl and boy scout patrols were organized, «Kalyna» and «Orly», respectively, and two junior scout dens, «Nezabudky» and «Vedmedyky». For the “S” Campaign to support the NTsh in Sarcelles, France, which ran from 1962, the St. Catharines Plast branch was second only to Toronto as to funds collected.

Weekly Plast programs took place at the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. *Plastuny* of the St. Catharines group would go to camps with the Hamilton branch, at Toronto’s *Plastova Sich* and Buffalo’s *Novyi Sokil*. In 1965, Plast organized a Ukrainian Saturday school; after four years, management of the *kursy* was taken over by the local ucc. The St. Catharines Plast group became a full-fledged branch in 1967.

The troop-based scout camps of this branch were very successful, thanks in great part to the indefatigable scout-senior Orest Haras, a professional expert in wilderness camping and leader of showcase events

and rallies at regional and national Canadian Plast assemblies (including the Youth Demonstration at the 2nd skvU in Toronto, 1973, and Ukrainian Youth Day during the Olympics in Montreal, 1976).

St. Catharines *stanytsia* is the home of girl scout Troop #14 «Olha Kobylanska», organized in 1968, registered 1970, and banner consecrated in 1974. It also has a junior boy scout den called «Tyhry» and a junior girl scout den called «Pidsnizhnyky».

<b>St. Catharines</b>	1962	1997
Junior scouts	50	18
Girl & boy scouts	34	6
Rover-rank scouts	28	2
Scout-seniors	7	4
Total	119	30

### *Saskatchewan province*

In the province of Saskatchewan, Plast groups were formed in the years 1949–50 in Prince Albert, where Rev. Volodymyr Ivashko was assigned, in Regina at the initiative of Mykola Topolnytsky, and in Saskatoon, led by Oryp Shydlovsky. The group in Prince Albert lasted until 1953, when Rev. Ivashko was re-assigned. In Regina and Saskatoon, the Plast programs were discontinued after a few months, due to the lack of scout leaders.

When Rev. Ivashko came to Saskatoon in 1955, he organized a founding branch meeting on January 10, and Plast revived its activity there; by the end of the year, there were 26 boy scouts, unique for the time in the fact that half them were born in Canada. Activities took place after school, because on the weekends, the scouts would leave the city and go home to their farms. Efforts in 1958 to organize girl scouts were not successful. The branch published an excellent history to mark its 10th anniversary.

Most often, the Saskatoon *plastuny* camped at the Ukrainian Park Campground in Manitoba with the Winnipeg branch. Rev. Ivashko continued his work with the Plast group until 1982, when it ended its activity. In 1996, a Plast group was formed out of six families and was briefly active, under the leadership of Bohdan Baran.

<b>Saskatoon</b>	1955	1982	1996
Junior scouts	21	0	0
Girl & boy scouts	4	4	10
Rover-rank scouts	1	1	0
Scout-seniors	0	2	2
Total	26	7	12

In Regina, thanks to the efforts of Sofia Skrypnyk, a *Plast-pryiat* was set up on 27 November 1963, headed by Dr. Bohdan Kazymyra. The «Yevshan-Zillia» junior scout group, led by Skrypnyk, first met on 23 December; members were aged 6–13. The following summer, two girls went to Minneapolis for camp, three went to Winnipeg, and one boy and one girl went to *Plastova Sich*. A UPU scout group was active in 1965.

### Calgary

A Plast group was formed in Calgary on 19 November 1982, made up of two junior scout dens, led by Luba Diduch and Marianka Pochmursky. The head of the group was Aka Papish. It is the home of the second co-ed scout troop in Canada. The junior scouts and boy and girl scouts take part in the camps of the Edmonton and Winnipeg branches, including the winter camps.

The Calgary Plast group includes the «Vedmedi» junior boy scout den and the «Metelyky» a junior girl scout den, as well as the co-ed scout Troop #102 «Oleksa Dovbush»; its troop banner was con-secrated in 2005.

<b>Calgary</b>	1993	1997
Junior scouts	12	13
Girl & boy scouts	13	6
Rover-rank scouts	2	0
Scout-seniors	4	3
Total	31	24

\* \* \*

### **Members of Plast who received the Order of Canada**

The Order of Canada is the highest civilian award in Canada, given to persons in all aspects of the Canadian community. Their achievements can be various but they should enrich the lives of others and be significant to society. The Order is officially awarded by the Governor-General of Canada.



**Peter Savaryn, CM, QC, LLB, LLD  
OC awarded 29 June 1987**

Former Chancellor of the University of Alberta and Senior Partner in the law firm Savaryn & Savaryn. Head of the SKVU, founding member of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council, and key promoter of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta. Savaryn has worked to promote multiculturalism in Canada and is active as a volunteer in the Ukrainian community.

**Ostap Hawaleshka, CM, MEng, DSc,  
PEng, OC awarded 30 May 2001**

Professor of Industrial Engineering at the University of Manitoba, and scientific, management, and business consultant abroad. Instrumental in founding the Science and Technology Center of Kyiv, a CIDA initiative that redirected Ukraine's engineering capabilities and reduced the risk of nuclear proliferation. Widely respected for his leadership, diplomacy, and negotiating skills, Hawaleshka is also a dedicated community volunteer.



**Erast Huculak  
OC awarded 5 October 2006**



Built his pharmacy enterprise from a single dispensary into one of the largest suppliers to long-term care facilities across Canada. Fostering others by encouragement and example, he endowed a Chair in Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography at the University of Alberta, and was a founder of

the Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund. He is deeply involved in helping Ukraine to make a peaceful transition to democracy.

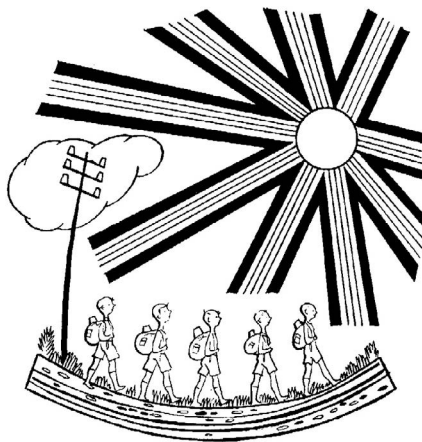
### Members of Plast awarded the Shevchenko Medal (Canada)

The Shevchenko Medal is awarded by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to persons and organizations for their outstanding contribution to the development of the Ukrainian Canadian community. **As an organization, Plast was awarded the Shevchenko medal in 1998**, and the following Plast members have also been awarded in their various fields of endeavor:

1971	Mykola Plawiuk, Grimsby ON	
1977	Peter Savaryn, Edmonton	
1980	Leonida Wertyporoch, Toronto	
1983	Zenon Duda, Toronto	
	Antonina Horochowych, Toronto	
	Rev. Volodymyr Ivashko, Saskatoon	
	Andrij Kachor, Winnipeg	
1986	Bohdan Kachor, Winnipeg	Ivanna Kachor, Winnipeg
	Sophia Klymkowych, Edmonton	Bohdan Onyschuk, Toronto
	Yaroslav Skrypnyk, Edmonton	Omelan Tarnavskyy, Toronto
	Sophia Zalozetska, Winnipeg	Yaroslava Zorych, Toronto
1989	Rev. Bohdan Hanushevsky, Vancouver	
1992	Ihor Baryn, Toronto	Rev. Petro Bilaniuk, Toronto
1995	Erast Huculak, Toronto	Jaroslav Rozumnyj, Winnipeg
1998	Jurij Klufas, Toronto	Olha Savaryn, Edmonton
	Luba Zaraska, Toronto	
2001	Lesia Chraplywa-Schur, London	Sophia Kachor, Winnipeg
	Marco Levytsky, Edmonton	Lydia Palij, Toronto
	Julia Woychyshyn, Ottawa	
2004	Adrian Boyko, Saskatoon	Maria Dytyniak, Edmonton
	Borys Sirsky, Ottawa	
2007	Halyna Kvitka Kondracki, Toronto	Orest Pawliw, Montreal
2010	Bohdan Medwidsky, Edmonton	Roman Serbyn, Montreal
	Borys Wrzesnewskyy, Toronto	
2013	Roman Borys, Toronto	Daria Darewych, Toronto
	Jurij Darewych, Toronto	Iroida Wynnyckyy, Toronto
2016	Tanya Dzulynsky, Toronto	Daria Luciw, Edmonton
	Paul Migus, Toronto	Orest Subtelny, Toronto

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2. Korchyns'kyi [Korchynsky], Volodymyr. [...], *Ukrains'ki visti* (Edmonton), 11 January 1933
3. [...], *Visti z ukrains'kykh zemel'*, 16 March 1932, p. 2
4. [...], 'Zhuravli,' *Plastovyi visnyk* 8 (1954)
5. Ivashko, Volodymyr, Rev. [...], *Plastovyi visnyk* 11–12 (1949), no. 8–9
6. Piasets'kyi, Iu. [Piaseckyj, Yuriy]. [...], 'Moie vidnoshennia do Ukrainy i Kanady,' *Plastovyi visnyk* 11–12 (1949), no. 8–9, p. 15
7. Tysov's'kyi [Tysovsky], Oleksander. 'Zustrich,' *Biuletyn' iuvileinoï plastovoï zustrichi* (Winnipeg 1961)
8. 'Shevchenkivskyi zmah,' *Zustrich 1–XII* (Winnipeg 1961)
9. Svitukha [Switucha], Mykola. . 'Zvit holovy KPS,' *Plastovyi visnyk* [...] (1967/8)
10. Plast - Ukrainian Youth Association of Canada. 'Submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada,' 31 March 1971.



## Chapter 13

# Plast in Britain

Although Ukrainians were immigrating to Great Britain since the early 20th century, it was only after WWII that their numbers were large enough to establish widespread organizations. This first wave, arriving in 1945–46, consisted of the approximately 6,000 soldiers who had served in the Polish Army under General Anders. About one year later, they were followed by veterans of the Galicia Division of the German Army. As formally still prisoners-of-war, they were assigned to work on English farms, and many eventually remained in Britain. Finally, in 1947–48 about 14,000 Ukrainian DPs came from the British Zone in Germany. Although many of the overall total soon emigrated to the USA and Canada, about 25–30,000 stayed in Britain, where they formed the core of the Ukrainian community.

In demographic terms, this was a highly unbalanced immigration. Young males greatly outnumbered females, by about 10 to 1. As a result, there was a high percentage of intermarriage among the newcomers, and many of the males (about 40%) remained bachelors. In later decades, an influx of about 2,000 Ukrainian females from Poland and Yugoslavia helped to redress this imbalance somewhat.

Most Ukrainians in Britain lived in the industrial areas of the Midlands and Northern England, clustering in cities such as Manchester (30%), Bradford (26%), and Nottingham (26%). This community also had a comparatively small intelligentsia, with only 3% having a secondary or post-secondary education. About 20,000 were Byzantine-rite Catholics, who eventually established 14 parishes, and about 5,000 were Orthodox, served by 10 priests in six churches and 22 congregations.

Although in time they acquired many of the social characteristics of the British population, the Ukrainians also stood out in their drive to provide a higher education for their children. Indeed, the second generation had a higher percentage of university graduates than the British average. Another characteristic of this community's above-average achievement was the fact that more tended to own their own homes. Finally, as was typical of all the postwar DPs, the Ukrainian immigrants in Britain were highly politicized. The vast majority were nationalists, with most supporting the OUN-Bandera faction, but a considerable minority also sided with the OUN-Melnyk group. In 1947 the



community organized the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB). Subsequently, internal conflicts prompted a split in the AUGB, a group breaking away to form the rival Federation of Ukrainians in Great Britain (FUGB).

\* \* \*

## **Origins of Plast in Britain**

As the dispersal of Plast members from the German and Austrian DP camps began, Great Britain was one of their earliest destinations. Ukrainian DPs began to arrive there in 1946–47. However, their numbers were not large, the conditions they encountered were difficult, and politicization among the immigrants—which Plast tried to avoid—was extensive. Moreover, it transpired that in the homeland of scouting, the creation of non-English scouting organizations was not welcomed.

One advantage that Plast had in Britain was the presence of several highly committed individuals, who contributed much to its early organization. In early 1948, the rover-rank scout Tadyrnyr Atamaniuk convened a meeting of recently arrived Plast members in London, and in the summer of that year, about 200 gathered for an informal assembly. A second, more formal meeting was held in Manchester on 8 October 1948, chaired by the highly respected and experienced Tsiopa Palijiw, who had been appointed as the Plast leader-designate in Britain. The meeting heard from Palijiw, who was based in Bradford, that the time for romantic hikes and camps was past, and that in the future Plast depended on establishing viable communities of Ukrainian families that would provide a demographic base for their organization. Apparently, many at the meeting were dissatisfied with what they heard, and drifted away from Plast, leaving only a few to carry on.

There were other problems. Since British authorities would not allow Plast to incorporate as a scouting organization, at a meeting of about 30 rover-rank scouts on 4 June 1949, Vasyl Rad proposed that Plast define its organizational goal as the preservation and cultivation of Plast traditions. Consequently, the Plast members formed the Organization of Developmental Camps and Hikes for Youth (TVOMM, with “Organization” changed to “Club” on 14 June 1950, to minimize costs). It was led by Tsiopa Palijiw, with Mykhailo Buchok and Olha Pendiuk as deputies, and based in Bradford, where Palijiw lived. The emerging KPS also included Mykola Popovych, Bohdanna Zolotnytska, Vasyl Rad, and



*Founders of Plast in Britain, 1948: Anna Herasymovych, leader-designate Tsiopa (Kekelija) Palijiw, and D. Havryliuk.*

V. Fastivets; except for Palijiw, all were young rover-rank scouts. Somewhat later, Buchok became the head of the organization and Palijiw served as its mentor.

Initially, the few Plast activists such as A. Herasymovych, R. Hrynash, D. Vitoshynska, I. Yanushevska, M. Buchok, B. Zlotnytska, N. Sos, and Navrotsky visited family vacationers in Hikelton, Hull, and Corsham to recruit new members. Because the children rarely heard of Plast and were of varying ages, their activities consisted mostly of songs, games, and folk dancing, rather than age-appropriate scouting activities. This would continue to be a consistent problem for Plast in Britain. A few patrols of rover-rank scouts were founded, such as the *Levy* in Scotland, *Stepovi Orly* in Oxfordshire, and *Chotyry Samitnyky* in Wales, but they did not last long. In the early 1950s, Ukrainian families began to move from transition camps to growing Ukrainian neighborhoods in Bradford, Wolverhampton, Darby, Leicester, London, Manchester, and Nottingham, creating a base for the establishment of regular Plast structures. Among them was a prestigious member—Danylo Skoropadsky (son of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky); unfortunately, he died in a car accident in 1957.

The creation of more stable Ukrainian communities posed another challenge for Plast—namely, competition from SUM, a more nationalistic youth organization of the OUN-Bandera faction. Parents who had originally enrolled their children in Plast re-enrolled them in SUM. Other

community organizations also split: the AUGB came under Bandera-OUN domination, while non-Bandera elements supported the newly formed FUGB. The resulting tensions, which often carried over into community events, gave rise to ideological conflicts; one of the consequences was that Plast grew slowly.

In April 1952, Tsiopa Palijiw left England for Toronto. Fortunately for Plast, another committed individual, Anna Herasymovych, took her place. Calm and balanced, Herasymovych had been brought up in the prewar Plast era in Lviv. Avoiding party conflicts, as head of KPS in Britain she was a guiding force until her premature death in 1971.

In order to strengthen its financial foundations, in 1956 Plast in Britain took the unusual step of purchasing a grocery store in Leeds. It was run by scout-senior Stepan Shykh, with some help from rover-rank scout Halyna Lamaniv, in the hope that profits from the undertaking would strengthen the organization. But four years later, when Shykh could find no one to help him in this project, the store was sold.

Despite the various difficulties that Plast in Britain encountered, its growth was steady (albeit slow), reaching an apex of development in the 1960s. At that time, there were seven small city branches (*stanytsi*), in Bradford, Wolverhampton, Darby, Leicester, London, Manchester, and Nottingham. In 1970 the membership in these branches averaged about 30–40, with Manchester being the largest (70 members). In the 1970s the total membership of Plast in Britain was about 250.

By the 1980s a decline in Plast membership set in, with the overall total slipping to 215. This was particularly noticeable in camp attendance, which dropped to one-half, even one-third, of what it was in the 1970s. However, in the 1990s, as a second generation of parents who grew up in Britain enrolled their children in Plast, camp attendance improved markedly, reaching numbers equal to those of the 1970s. However, due to extensive intermarriage, most of the children had a poor command of Ukrainian, or none.<sup>1</sup>

## Scouting camps

Given the small size of the Plast city branches in Britain, and their inability to conduct a full spectrum of activities, the summer camps played a highly important role for Plast development. The first Plast camp was held in 1950, even before any of the city branches were formed. Led by Tsiopa Palijiw, it took place in Chiddingfold, Surrey, on an es-



*First Plast Camp in England, depicting various activities, 1950.*

tate recently purchased by the AUGB for Ukrainian war invalids. Largely thanks to the efforts of Palijiw and Yaroslav Havrykh, Plast used these premises for their camps until 1956. These camps were three weeks in duration, accommodating the junior scouts in bunkhouse rooms, while the boy and girl scouts slept in tents brought from Germany.

By the mid-1950s, problems arose in finding appropriate camping sites. Because SUM had also requested to use the Chiddingfold estate, the AUGB decided that both organizations would hold their summer camps on the property, alternating yearly between three weeks' and two weeks' duration. For Plast, this arrangement was unsatisfactory, and for several years it stayed at the camping grounds of the Ukrainian Catholic Church; when that was sold, from 1960 to 1964 Plast camped on a site in Garedon Hall, near Leicester, that belonged to an English owner. It became clear, however, that the best option was for Plast to acquire its own property.

For two years, Herasymovych, Shykh, and Oksana Parashchak spent a great deal of time looking for an appropriate site. Finally, in 1966

they found a 7-acre tract in northern Wales, near the village of Helsinfen and the town of Colvin Bay. It was a farm with several fields, not far from the sea and distant from major highways. After fundraising in the Ukrainian community and borrowing from several Plast members, the property was purchased. Starting this same year, Plast held its camps on this site, called Rangemore; in Ukrainian, the name used was *Verkhovyna*.

Initially, the Darby city branch managed the site maintenance, and later, the Manchester branch—particularly its *Plast-pryiat*, led by Teodor Rachkovych—carried out extensive repairs. The head of the British KPS, M. Popovych-Nazaruk, spearheaded the collection of 40,000 British pounds from Ukrainian organizations to help pay for the renovations. When the site was not used for camping, its fields were rented to local farmers. In the early 1990s, children from Chernobyl camped at the site.

## City branches

Even at its high point in the 1960–70s, Plast’s seven city branches in Britain were small, rarely with more than 50 members. This often resulted in mixed-gender and mixed-age dens and patrols, making it difficult to implement a regular Plast program. None of the city branches owned any property, and meetings were usually held in Ukrainian com-



*Closing ceremonies at camp, Zelenyi Klyn, 1964.*

munity centers or church halls. Membership tended to be mostly in the younger divisions, with fewer boy and girl scouts than junior scouts, and virtually no rover-rank scouts.

### *Bradford*

The first Plast city branch in Britain was in Bradford, founded in 1950 and initially numbering 28 members. Its early activity suffered a setback when, in April 1952, Tsiopa Palijiw left for Canada, and another activist, Roman Dubil, also moved away. In their place, Anna Herasymovych and Oksana Parashchak commuted from Manchester every two weeks to run meetings and manage Bradford branch affairs. In 1963, two members from Bradford were part of the Plast delegation that attended the Scout Jamboree in Greece. By the 1970s, membership declined—partly because of political conflicts within the community—to the point that there was negligible Plast activity in the Bradford city branch.

### *Wolverhampton*

Plast activity began here in 1954 with the arrival of a rover-rank scout, Roman Dubil, and in 1959 the original group formed a city branch. Wolverhampton's most successful year was 1972, with 26 members. Although small in number, this group was very active, especially in the development of the *Verkhovyna* camping site, for which Dubil received a Plast medal of merit, St. George (silver).

### *Darby*

The first Plast members began to arrive in Darby, located in central England, in 1949, and the first junior scout den was formed in early 1950. Initially, Plast had little competition as a youth organization, and its numbers grew steadily, especially after O. Marchenko and O. Kelman arrived in the area. In 1960 there were five junior scout dens and boy and girl scout troops, which met weekly in the premises of the AUGB.

As extracurricular activities, Plast also organized table-tennis and soccer teams in Darbyshire, as well as a musical ensemble. A major accomplishment was its Chupryнка dance group, led by Martyn Nazaruk, which achieved great popularity in the 1970s, appearing before audiences of 500–1,000 in London, Manchester, and Cannes. After a decade of success, it declined, and in the 1990s many of the Plast dancers joined

the SUM ensemble Hoverlia. In the late 1970s, the Darby branch suffered serious losses when some of its most active members emigrated to the USA, Canada, and Australia. During the 1990s, it had only 21 members.

### *Leicester*

In the 1950s, a group of rover-rank scouts arrived in Leicester, and by 1962 had organized Plast summer camps to send their children to. On 25 October 1964, a city branch was established here by Illia Lahodynsky, as authorized by Anna Herasymovych, with 11 members. In 1969, under the leadership of Yaroslav Mycio, they celebrated the blessing of their scout troop's banner, and by 1979 the Leicester branch had 32 members.

### *London*

Plast activity in London began on 25 February 1950, when a junior scout den, consisting of five girls and three boys, was established by M. Levytsky. In 1952, with the arrival of several rover-rank scouts, two boy and girl scout patrols were organized in London. Some older members of the group also travelled to Corsham to organize Plast activities. In the 1960s–70s, the London Plast group had about 35 members, and a *Plast-pryiat* parents' auxiliary was established in 1965.

Plast marked the national holiday traditions together with other non-Banderite community groups. In 1974 the scout troops organized a successful art show for the Ukrainian community, and in 1976 the rover-rank scouts organized an exhibit about Plast and Ukraine. By 1979 a younger generation, led by Marta Enkala, took over leadership. One of their innovative initiatives was to establish a pre-Plast *sadochok* group for the younger siblings of Plast members.

### *Manchester*

The largest Plast city branch in Britain was located in Manchester. At the outset, there were only about 15 members, and their activities had little to do with scouting—due to the lack of qualified scout leaders, but also due to the absence of heritage-language schools. By 1956 there were two junior scout dens and two boy and girl scout troops. By 1963 the branch numbered 70 members, and it enjoyed an active *Plast-pryiat* parents' auxiliary, with 20 members. The Plast group at the 1963 jamboree in Greece included two members from the Manchester branch.



*Celebrating the 20th anniversary of Plast in Britain, 1969.*

Well-situated in the middle of England, Manchester was the site of numerous Plast assemblies. The city branch established a Ukrainian lending library and held an annual picnic for the Ukrainian community, and in 1975 it organized a concert to mark the 25th anniversary of Plast in Britain. Until 1991, Plast meetings in Manchester were held at the Rally Club, and thereafter in the AUGB building.

### *Nottingham*

Ukrainian parents in Nottinghamshire would send their children to Plast camps as early as the 1950s, but a city branch wasn't founded there until 13 July 1963. Eventually it obtained spacious 3-room premises in the AUGB building. In the 1970s it had 32 members, with 20 in the *Plast-pryiat* auxiliary. Given its central location, Nottingham often served as a meeting place for the British KPS, as well as for scout leader training courses and Plast assemblies. In Nottingham, as elsewhere in Britain, the decision to stay above politics explained, in part, why Plast membership remained relatively low.

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Despite the impact of assimilation and of geographical dispersal, Plast in Britain managed to survive, and maintained strong international contacts. In the early 2000s its membership was over 100, about half of what it had been in the 1970s. Nonetheless, the seven small but long-standing Plast city branches send their members to camp at *Verkhovyna* in Wales every year. Plast's enduring survival in Britain should be considered a noteworthy success.

Reference:

1. *Plast in Great Britain, 1948–1998: 50th Anniversary Publication* (London 1999)



*Combined British Plast city branch camp and scout leader training at the Verkhovyna site, Northern Wales, 1977.*

## Chapter 14

# Plast in Australia\*

Compared to other countries where Plast established itself, Australia provided a most unusual environment. For this reason, a more extensive context is provided in this chapter compared to others. Most importantly, Australia was very far from Europe, and relatively isolated. The warm climate, lack of greenery, and different seasonal calendar (summer came in December) could be, at first, disconcerting. Arriving in 1948 from the DP camps in Germany and Austria, the postwar immigrants had no predecessors, except for a few scattered individuals. Unlike in the USA or Canada, there were no older Ukrainian communities, no churches, no community halls, and nothing that was familiar or could serve as a gathering place. Indeed, many of the newcomers thought that their stay in Australia would be temporary, and that they would return to Europe.

While the environment was, at the outset, different and unfamiliar, the Ukrainians who came to Australia were essentially the same as the DPs who went to the USA and Canada. They were mostly young, energetic, and committed to their community and culture, intent on reestablishing the institutions and organizations that they had left behind. Like their compatriots in the USA and Canada, they found themselves in an Anglo-Saxon environment that, despite some barriers, benignly provided stability and numerous opportunities for personal and community self-realization. To a large extent, this explains the organizational upsurge that became a hallmark of the small but dynamic Ukrainian-Australian community.

As usual, the beginnings were difficult. The first wave of Ukrainian DP immigrants, about 3,500 in number, arrived in Australia in 1948 on three ships, the *SS General Stewart* (in February), *SS General Black* (in April), and *SS General Sturgis* (in May). Demographically, the initial wave was a non-homogeneous group: mostly young, unmarried men, couples without children, and family men who had come alone in advance, leaving their wives and children in Europe. Confined to transfer camps, they all had to fulfill a two-year obligation to the Australian Immigration Board that usually consisted of hard physical labour, building roads or working on the railroads. Soon they were joined by their families, and the community became more demographically balanced, although men continued to outnumber women 4 to 6. Other features of

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\* Revised by Orest Dzulynsky.

this Ukrainian influx to Australia were that the proportion of intelligentsia was smaller than in North America, and that of the Orthodox faith (compared to Catholic) was greater. In time, most Ukrainians settled around the biggest cities, such as Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide.

Eventually, about 20–22,000 DPs formed the core of the Ukrainian community in Australia (about 165,000 DPs of various nationalities had arrived). In the 1970s they were joined by a small number of Ukrainian immigrants from Yugoslavia (namely, Bosnia). And in the 1990s about 7,500 Ukrainians from the former USSR began to arrive; while some of this last wave joined the existing Ukrainian organizations, most—especially the Russian speakers—did not. In 2000, Ukrainians estimated their total number in Australia as being about 35,000, with Australian census figures citing about 15,000 as Ukraine-born. In 2001, there were about 6,000 Ukrainians around Melbourne (Victoria state), 5,000 in Sydney (New South Wales), and 1,500 in Adelaide (South Australia).

Given their relatively small numbers, it is surprising how many organizations were created in the Ukrainian-Australian community—about 250 organizations, 40 community halls, seven campgrounds, two Ukrainian-language newspapers and two youth organizations. In 1953 the Federation of Ukrainian Organizations in Australia was established. Like elsewhere, assimilation is, of course, widespread, and many Ukrainian organizations are barely surviving. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian community remains to this day one of the most organized ethnic groups in Australia.

## Origins

Plast in Australia began its existence much like it did in the USA and Canada. The Plast executive in Germany appointed its leader-designate, Roman Olesnytsky, to initiate organizational work. In 1950, he appointed an interim group, based in Adelaide, that would provide leadership until an assembly could be called to elect a full-fledged KPS national executive. Consisting of M. Shevchuk, Ya. Andrukhovych, and E. Hurko, the interim group worked with great enthusiasm despite the demands of their immigrant two-year contract, hard physical work, and studies.

Initially, informal youth groups congregated around older Plast members for Ukrainian scouting activities, to form units and establish branches in the major cities where Ukrainians tended to congregate—Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. There were several long-time scouts among the early arrivals, men such as P. Bohatsky from central Ukraine and Myron Fedusevych and Evhen Pelensky from eastern Galicia.



*Founders of Plast in Australia, from left: Myroslav Shevchuk, Yaroslav Andrukhovych, Roman Olesnytsky, leader-designate, and E. Hurko.*

In July 1951, the first Plast national conference was held in Sydney, and it elected the first KPS for Australia. Unlike Canada and USA, in Australia the rover-rank scouts were in forefront of early organizational activity, whereas most of the scout-seniors were involved in other community activities, leaving Plast to their younger colleagues. In 1953 the rover-rank scouts called their first assembly.

Much of the Plast organizational activity occurred at the city branch level. Indeed, the role of the city branches continued to be more important than that of the KPS during the entire history of Plast in Australia. Nonetheless, KPS did perform important functions, especially those of a coordinating nature.

## International participation

The HPB assigned Australia the privilege of representing Plast at the 10th International Scouting Jamboree, held in the Philippines in August 1959. The Plast delegation was led by scout-senior Evhen Baranovsky and rover-rank scout Yuri Nestor from Adelaide, Ihor Osidach from Melbourne, and Bohdan Bilinsky from Sydney. Although Plast was not a member of the WOSM at that time, the goal of the delegation was to emphasize that Ukrainian youth felt themselves to be a part of the international scouting brotherhood. The Ukrainian group held demonstrations of Ukrainian folk art in their camp to familiarize scouts from all over the world with Ukrainian culture and national aspirations. What they had to show and say gained a good deal of attention in Manila, as

was seen from the television reports and newspaper stories that profiled with the Ukrainian delegation.

KPS Australia sent representatives to the CUPO world conference, which was held in the United States. The delegation was headed by Plast scout-senior Yuri Semkiv. At the second US CUPO, Plast scout-senior Roman Pavlyshyn of Brisbane played an active role. Plast also developed ties with non-Ukrainian Australian organizations, and notably became the only ethnic scout organization that belonged to the Australian Youth Council. Large groups of Australian Plast scouts participated in UMPZ jamborees in Canada and the US. Locally, Plast continued to maintain good relations with the Australian Association of Scouts in Exile. And at the international jamboree of this association in Sydney in 1975, Plast members took first place in the camping skills competition.

## **Plast activities**

In December 1957, the 45th anniversary of Plast was marked at the first national jamboree, held in Seville near Melbourne. About 230 scouts from all over Australia, divided into six sub-camps, camped together for 10 days. This provided an opportunity for the Plast leadership to observe the progress that had been made and analyze Plast activities in the various Australian branches. The KPS concluded that organizational work was proceeding well and there was good reason for optimism.



*Melbourne, celebration of Plast 50th anniversary, 1962–63.*

More regular Plast activity began once the Melbourne and Sydney city branches purchased camping sites. In 1960 attendance at these camps was about 600. It was decided to have troop-organized camps every year, and national jamboree-type camps every five years.

In the early 1960s, the KPS began publishing the bulletin *Biblioteka plastovoho vykhovnyka* (Library of the Scout Leader), which appeared seven times in 1963–5 and three times in 1965–7.

Another noteworthy event during those decades was the golden Jubilee of Plast, celebrated on 23 December 1962. Over 600 scouts from South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Canberra, and Victoria (the host city branch) gathered to demonstrate to nearly 1,500 attending guests the progress that Plast had achieved in Australia. Indeed, this event marked the high point of the Ukrainian scouts in Australia.

### *Plast-pryiat*

As was the case in the USA and Canada, the parents' auxiliary played an important role in the early days of Plast in Australia. They provided invaluable support in the conduct of camps, collected funds to send Plast members to scout jamborees in the Philippines and Greece, and often managed administrative affairs in the city branches. An especially important role played by *Plast-pryiat* in these branches was its support in the purchase of Plast camping sites. The first such purchase was made in 1952 by the Sydney branch. The 40-acre site was located near Ingleburn on the Georges River, not far from Sydney; they called it *Kholodnyi Yar*. The second Plast campground was purchased in 1960 by the Melbourne branch, a 150-acre plot in protected parklands about 75 miles west of the city; they called it *Sokil* and added an impressive 50-meter swimming pool, a chapel, and dormitories. (In 1963, a monument to Taras Shevchenko, the first in Australia, was erected at *Sokil*.) In 1966 the Adelaide Plast branch also acquired a camping site, which they called *Beskyd*.

## Membership

In terms of membership, Plast reached its highpoint in Australia in the late 1960s.

Total Plast members in 1967		975
Junior scouts	14 packs	238
Boy and girl scouts	10 troops	403
Rover-rank scouts	11 fraternities and patrols	218
Scout-seniors	–	116

During the 1970s, Plast in Australia began to exhibit two contrasting impressions. On the one hand, it still demonstrated the dynamism and activism that rested on the solid organizational foundation which had been laid in previous decades, and on the other hand, problems began to emerge that were typical of all immigrant societies.

Essentially, the problem confronting the Australian Ukrainians was similar to that faced by Plast in the USA and Canada—that is, how to remain faithful to traditional Plast principles and values while adjusting to new, Australian-bred attitudes among the youth. One of the proposals was to make the rover-rank scouts more socially oriented by encouraging lectures or discussions on current events and on social interaction. For the older boy and girl scouts, it was proposed that a program be instituted that focused on the development of specialized skills.

These issues evoked heated discussions. And the differences in opinion were reflected in the fact that for the first time, two competing lists of candidates for KPS positions were put forward. The list headed by Ihor Hrynevych won the election, and an outburst of energy and activism followed. The KPS organized several scout leader training conferences in 1971 and 1972, in Sydney, Hillsville (Victoria), and Melbourne.

The problem of declining rover-rank scout activity was addressed. Following the American example, annual *Orlykiada* scouting skills and Ukrainian knowledge competitions for the older boy and girl scouts were introduced. And the Australian *plastuny* also participated in an international competition called *Plast—nasha hordist i mriia*, with the Melbourne-area «Bdzhilky» girl scout patrol and the «Soloveiky» junior scout den winning first place in their age groups.

In the area of publications, a song-book called *U mandry* (Let's Hit the Trail), edited by long-time Plast activist O. Tarnawska, was printed, quickly gaining popularity in Ukrainian diaspora communities worldwide. The KPS newsletter saw 18 issues in a two-year period, and it also supported the publication of Ukrainian newspapers and books. Another noteworthy event was the establishment of a Plast archive-museum by Myroslav Shevchuk that was later led and expanded by Omelian Slobodian.

The highlight of Plast activity in Australia historically was an international Plast jamboree held in 1970/1972 at the Adelaide branch's *Beskyd* campground, marking the 60th anniversary of Plast. With 390 participants, international Plast leaders such as Wasyl Palienko, head of the HPB, Pavlo Dorozhynsky, head of KPS USA, and Omelan Tarnavskij, head of KPS Canada, also attended. In August 1972, a 25-member Australian delegation travelled to the UMPZ jamboree at *Vovcha Tropa* in East Chatham, NY.

After about 25 years in Australia, the Ukrainian community in general began to face difficulties related to the inevitable process of assimilation—a problem even worse in Australia because of the high inter-ethnic marriage rate, due to a notably lower number of Ukrainian females. After a period of rapid and dynamic growth, Plast in Australia too encountered a time of troubles. Younger scouts began to insist ever more forcefully that Plast adapt to Australian ways. For their part, the older scouts remained true to the traditional European ways of doing things. As usual, the problem of language use became more pressing. The younger Plast members felt handicapped by their declining ability to use Ukrainian. Older members insisted that Plast would not be Plast if it dropped its insistence on Ukrainian language use. This commitment to the use of Ukrainian disillusioned many of the young, and Plast membership began to decline. Moreover, it became increasingly difficult to fill leadership posts.

The morale of Plast members was raised when the Chief Scout, Yuriy Starosolsky, visited the Plast city branches of Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney in early 1975. Efforts were made to make the activities of the various divisions more interesting. Throughout the 1970s much attention was placed on mobilizing support for dissidents in Ukraine. Travel abroad, like sending a delegation of 18 scouts to Western Canada to participate in a Plast jamboree, was organized (UMPZ, August 1978).

The KPS made a special effort to develop good relations with its rival (but non-scouting) youth organization, SUM. In Sydney, a joint Plast-SUM camp was organized, and in Melbourne both youth organiza-



*Joint Plast-SUM camp, called “Moloda Ukraïna,” near Sydney, 1985.*



tions cooperated in organizing demonstrations in defense of Ukrainian dissidents (notably Yuri Shukhevych).

The Plast jamboree held in 1981–82 at *Sokil* to mark the 70th anniversary of Plast attracted over 400 participants. It was also attended by the Chief Scout, Yuriy Starosolsky. Led by the Melbourne branch president, the program included an impressive display of rhythmic exercises or *khorovody* and “live towers” to mark the completion of new barracks at *Sokil*. Little did the jamboree participants realize that one year later, in 1983, the newly constructed buildings at *Sokil* would burn down in a far-ranging fire.

## City branches

It should be noted that around 1980, a major difference developed between the city branches and the KPS. The former, as owners of real property, became incorporated entities governed by the laws of their respective states. The Australian KPS, however, was not incorporated, and its relationship with the city branches merely followed Plast guidelines. As a result, the branches often had to follow different rules and procedures than those proposed by the national executive.

### *Melbourne (including Geelong)*

In the late 1960s, Melbourne was the biggest city branch in Australia, reaching a maximum of 432 members in 1972. Since then, membership has decreased rather sharply, reflecting mainly the impact of assimilation. During the 1980s, the Melbourne branch averaged about 265 members, which by 1993 declined to 193. Despite the decline in numbers, in the 1990s Melbourne was still one of the largest Plast branches in the world.

In terms of property, Plast Melbourne also had considerable holdings. As mentioned above, the *Sokil* campground, with its 150 acres, 50-meter swimming pool, and bunkhouses for the junior scouts, was the largest in Australia, including sites rented out to families. In 1964, about 120 fir trees were planted to enhance the impressive grounds. However, the fire of 1983 destroyed the dorms and the recently planted trees, causing about \$130,000 worth of damage. The rebuilding effort was impressive. Donations came not only from Australia but also from the USA, Canada, and Germany, and various Ukrainian organizations in Australia also contributed. A fund of \$67,000 was collected; it was used to level the land, build a modern kitchen, repair damaged buildings, and hook up the campground to the electricity grid (which cost \$26,000). In 1988, 150

new trees were planted, and an infirmary and office quarters were built. That same year, a chapel named for St. George (patron saint of scouts) was built in the Transcarpathian mountain style. In short, the campground became even more attractive than it was before the fire. After the Plast campsites near Sydney and Adelaide were sold in 2008, *Sokil* was the only Plast camping site left in Australia.

Plast Melbourne had a headquarters building in Essendon, purchased in 1975 near the Ukrainian community's National Home. Subsequently, in 1984 Plast and SUM cooperated in constructing a Youth Building (*Dim Molodi*) to house both organizations; Plast contributed \$26,000.

During the 1960s and 1970s the Melbourne Plast city branch had four junior scout packs, one boy scout troop, and three girl scout troops comprising a total of 24 boy and girl scout patrols.

In addition to regular Plast activities, the Melbourne branch also supported a number of cultural groups. In 1970, Stepan Hnativ organized a Plast folk dancing group that existed for several years. In 1979–83 Mykhailo Vozniak led the Teren vocal group. And in 1993 L. Kohut organized the Vatra vocal ensemble. Clearly, the Plast city branch was important to its members and to Melbourne's Ukrainian community as a whole.

Over a period of 30 years, 1965–95, the Melbourne leadership involved about 60 individuals, not including about 40 who were scout leaders. In addition to their work in Plast, many were involved in community activities such as Ukrainian schools and scholarly roles, the cooperative movement, and cultural groups. The first honorary consul-general of Ukraine in Australia, Zina Botte, was also an active Plast member. From 1996 to 2008, the Melbourne Plast branch was headed by Natalia Hrynevych, Tonia Buts, Symon Kohut, and Pylyp Botte. During this time, the branch attracted a number of children from the fourth wave of immigrants to Australia.

## *Sydney*

The Plast branch in Sydney was the second-largest in Australia. It was organized very early, in the Bathurst transfer camp where Ukrainian immigrants lived during their first month in their new homeland. In the 1970s its membership averaged about 250, including one male and one female junior scout den, four boy scout troops, and three girl scout troops.

For years, the Sydney branch used a room in the National Home in Lidcombe for its meeting and festivities (Plast was part-owner of the building). Then, in 1976 Plast purchased a building opposite the National Home to use as its own headquarters; it was sold in 2009.

Plast in Sydney made numerous and largely successful attempts to encourage its members to travel abroad. The first time was in 1959, when Plast members from Sydney supported and participated in the World International Scouting Jamboree in the Philippines. In 1972, seven scouts from Sydney were members of the 15-person Australian delegation that travelled to East Chatham, NY, to mark the 60th anniversary of Plast. The group was led by Roman Dekhnych from Sydney and Marta Stelmakhiv from Melbourne. In 1978, ten scouts from Sydney, led by Yaroslav Ivanets, participated in the UMPZ near Edmonton, Canada. And in 1982, five rover-rank scouts from Sydney travelled, at their own cost, to the UMPZ in East Chatham. The following year, four rover-rank scouts and one scout-senior from Sydney took part in the UMPZ in Germany. Perhaps the most exciting of these trips occurred in 1994, when Plast members from Sydney, led by Ivanets and Dekhnych, traveled to Ukraine to camp with Plast members in Bukovyna.

In 1996, a national Plast jamboree was hosted by the Sydney city branch in Kangaroo Valley. It attracted considerable participation, with 110 Plast members remaining for the duration and over 400 participating in the major events. The success of the jamboree was greatly helped by contributions from the *Lisovi Chorly* fraternity, led by Stefan Vasylyk (who in 2007, shortly before his death, received the Plast award St. George Medal in gold) and Roman Dekhnych.

The other event was the great role played by Plast members, again led by Dekhnych, in welcoming Team Ukraine to the xxvii Olympic Games that were held in Sydney. The new Plast facilities for the city branch served as a place of relaxation for the Ukrainian athletes. Indeed, these premises functioned henceforth as a venue for many important Ukrainian community events. Leaders of the Sydney Plast city branch during this period were Mykhailo Sarakula, Yuri Syvak, Hryhori Huzii (two terms), and Yuri Sukhovorsky.

### *Adelaide*

The earliest Plast units to be organized on the island continent were in Adelaide in South Australia. In 1949 Evgenia and Yaroslav Andrukhovych established a junior scout pack, and in 1950 Roman Olesnytsky led the interim KPS. The Adelaide city branch was formally recognized in 1951, and Shevchuk elected as its leader. At its peak in 1961, it had 215 members. However, when SUM was established in Adelaide in 1963, many *plastuny* joined, and so by 1966 branch membership had dropped to 151. This average membership of 150 was maintained until the early 1990s, when it fell to

75. A unique feature of the Adelaide city branch was the establishment, on 14 June 1981, of a Plast museum-archive in the home of Omelian Slobodian, where Plast insignia, banners, uniforms, stamps, photos, books, and publications were collected.

The Adelaide scout troops organized an annual debutante ball and collected money for Ukrainian students in Brazil and for the victims of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster. In December 1966, the Adelaide Plast branch purchased a 46-acre campground in Lower Heritage, which was named *Beskyd* and included a large meeting-room, a modern kitchen, an infirmary, and a swimming pool. In 1971–72, *Beskyd* hosted the Australian Plast Jamboree, which attracted 450 participants, even including Plast members from the USA and Canada, and in 1986–87 it hosted another UMPZ international Plast jamboree marking the 75th anniversary of Plast.

The *Beskyd* campsite also hosted other important festivities. In 1988, on the anniversary of the Millennium of Christianity in Ukraine, a prayer service took place there, led by the Greco-Catholic hierarchy and many faithful. Meanwhile, the parents' auxiliary planted about 1,000 trees at the site; a special tree was planted in memory of Mykhailo Sukmanovsky, a Plast Adelaide member who was killed in Vietnam. When the 20th anniversary of the campsite was celebrated in 1988, a part of it was set aside and called St. Volodymyr Park. However, by 2005 it became apparent that the Plast city branch could no longer afford the campground, and it was sold.

### *Brisbane*

Distant from the major centers of Ukrainian settlement, and with a small membership, the Brisbane city branch maintained a surprisingly consistent level of activity, thanks to the efforts of Plast scouts whose careers had started back in Europe. Brisbane's contacts with the Australian KPS were always friendly and cooperative. It participated regularly in jamborees in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. One of its leading members, Roman Pavlyshyn, usually represented Australia at the CUPO.



*Australian delegation to 75th Anniversary UMPZ Plast Jamboree in Canada, 1987.*



*75th Plast Anniversary with visitors from Canada, 1986.*

## Canberra and New Zealand

There was a small group of Plast members in the capital of Australia, Canberra—about 20 in the 1960s. Later on, the capital attracted many professionals, and the Plast group in the city grew somewhat. Smaller Plast groups also existed in New Zealand, but their activity was sporadic.

## Recent developments

Plast activity in Australia declined considerably in the 1980s. The primary reason was assimilation, as everywhere in the Ukrainian diaspora. The children of the Plast pioneers focused on their careers, which prompted them to leave Plast and try to adapt to the dominant culture as quickly as possible. However, by the mid-1990s, when this generation began to have children, some began to return to Plast, or at least their children did. During this period, executive and scout leader positions gradually passed into the hands of a new generation of Plast activists, who were the children and, more often, the grandchildren of the Plast pioneers.

This rejuvenation of Plast activity came about for several reasons. Firstly, the Australian government adopted a policy of multiculturalism, which eased the pressure to assimilate and facilitated retaining Ukrainian cultural roots. Secondly, although the popularity of scouting as such declined perceptibly, the Australian educational system began to realize the value of emphasizing outdoor education. Plast found that it was very much in line with this new trend. Finally, Ukraine's independence made Ukrainian culture and identity both relevant and accessible. The Australian KPS began to develop strong ties with the newly revived Plast in Ukraine.

In 1996, thanks to the efforts of two young rover-rank scouts in Melbourne, Symon Kohut and Jarema Semkiw, a special issue of the *Yunak* magazine for *plastuny* worldwide was devoted to Plast in Australia.

In the first decade of the new millennium, the grandchildren—the third generation—of the original Plast members in Australia were enrolled in the organization. Moreover, some of the post-1991 immigrants from Ukraine, especially those in Melbourne, also became members of Plast. Consequently, prospects were encouraging that Plast would continue to exist in the future.

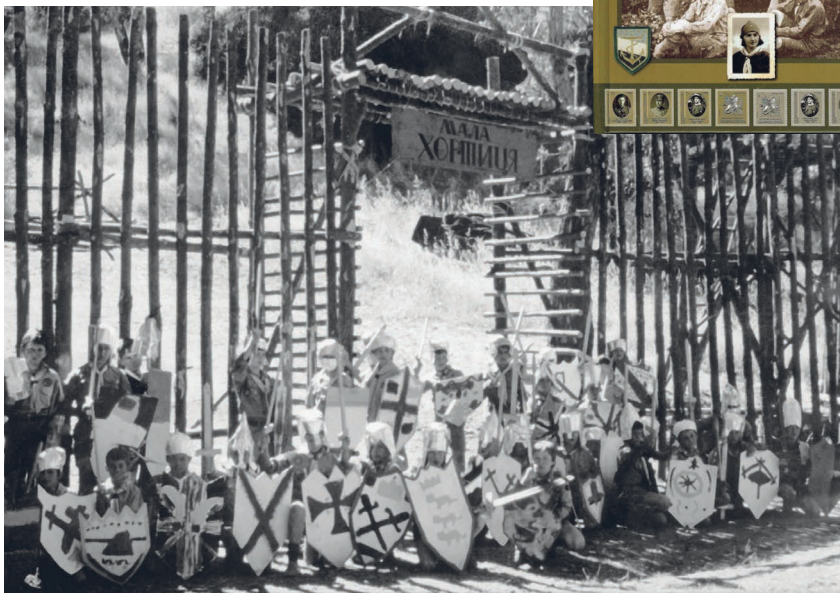
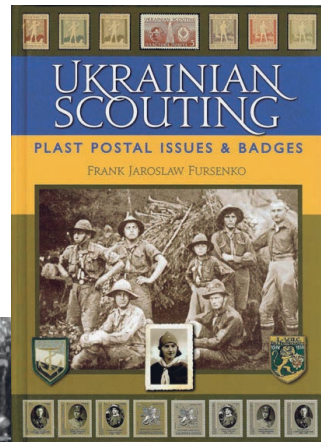
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Plast in Australia was a reflection of the organizational skills and dynamism of its founders. It emerged quickly and functioned effectively.

As in other immigrant countries, Ukrainian scouts, like all newcomers, faced the inevitable problem of assimilation into the Anglo-Saxon culture that was dominant in Australia. This, as well as the dispersal of Ukrainian communities and focus on career considerations, led to a decline in Plast membership (which was, however, smaller in terms of percentages than in the Australian scouts). Nonetheless, the ties to Plast remained among a considerable number of Ukrainian Australians. They felt themselves to be a part of the Ukrainian scouts, especially when they were reestablished in Ukraine. It was therefore a notable achievement when the children and grandchildren of the original Plast members in Australia prepared to celebrate the 100th anniversary of their scouting organization, which existed in Australia but had been founded in far-off Ukraine.

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*Junior scout camp, called Mala Khortytsia, during the 75th Anniversary Jamboree, 1986.*

## Chapter 15

# Plast in Argentina

Argentina was one of the first countries to open its doors to the postwar DPs, and about 6,000 Ukrainians decided to emigrate there. Some had tired of life in the DP camps; others were anxious to begin a new phase of their lives in a more stable environment. The fact that Argentina had attracted two sizable waves of Ukrainian immigrants previously—there were about 180,000 Ukrainians in the country—also played a role. As it happened, most of the newcomers settled in Buenos Aires and its suburbs, not in far-off Misiones where the original Ukrainian immigrants were concentrated. Buenos Aires became the center of Plast activity in Argentina; thus, the Ukrainians scouts in that country had the advantage of being concentrated in a single city. Their disadvantage, however, was that they were few in number, and the pressure to speak Spanish was intense. Nonetheless, having a significant percentage of intelligentsia among them, at least at the outset, the Ukrainian scouts were quick to organize Plast units similar to those they had left in Europe.

### Origins

As mentioned, the arriving DPs settled primarily in Buenos Aires and its suburbs. P. Gresko, appointed leader-designate by the HPB in Germany to initiate Plast activity in Argentina, called a gathering of members there on 6 March 1949. Thirty-six rover-rank scouts and scout-seniors who were veterans of scouting in the DP camps participated in the meeting, which took place in the premises of the Basilian Order. They supported Gresko in appointing a provisional KPS as of 26 March 1949. A city branch (*stanytsia*) was established in Buenos Aires by 11 June 1949.

Since the government of Argentina did not recognize foreign or foreign-led organizations, Plast needed the nominal sponsorship of one of the scouting organizations in the country. It chose to affiliate itself with the Union of Catholic Scouts of Argentina (USCA), because this organization promised Plast the greatest autonomy, allowed the use of Ukrainian, agreed to accept Orthodox members of Plast, and acquiesced to the use of standard Plast structure and traditions. This affiliation lasted until 1960–62, when Plast began to function as a formally and legally independent organization.





*Plast leader-designate P. Gresko (front center), with founding group of activists in Argentina.*

### *Activity*

By 1952 Plast, based in Buenos Aires, had attracted about 100 members. Its leadership was strengthened by the arrival of Mykhailo Wasylyk, an active scout from Austria. During the early 1950s, Plast activists, seeking to attract new members, worked to reach the children of new immigrants who lived in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. Soon a number of affiliated Plast groups arose there; they were given the designations that were used in the USCA: A for Buenos Aires, the Greco-Catholic church of the Basilians, and center of КРS; B for Villa Ballester; C for Boruztegi; and D for Buenos Aires, in the Orthodox Church. Smaller groups were also created in Villa Diamante, Beressi, and the faraway Greco-Catholic seminary of Apóstoles.

These Plast groups met regularly in September (springtime in the southern hemisphere) to mark the Spring Fest. This event, which lasted one or two days, was first held in Hudson, near a small Ukrainian community, and later was moved to a large property near Pereira.

### *Camping*

In the third year of Plast's existence in Argentina, the leaders turned their attention to camping. In 1952, the rover-rank scout Vovkun, on his own initiative, organized the first Plast camp in Argentina.

Lasting three days, with 13 participants, the camp took place at Playa Tunos near Buenos Aires. In 1953, the second camp was organized by Plast leader Klym near Punto India, on a property owned by the Basilian Order on the La Plata River, about 150 km south of Buenos Aires. The camp, called *Nenasytets*, had 25 participants and lasted for almost a month. Such was the beginning of the long tradition of Plast camps in Argentina.

### *Publishing*

Under the leadership of Klym, Plast activists published a Plast page in the Ukrainian paper *Ukrainske slovo*. Also, over 20 Plast newsletters appeared in 30 years. In addition, there were shortlived publications: in 1950–52 the boy scouts put out *Zelene veslo* (Green Oar), and the rover-rank scouts, belonging to the fraternity *Karpatski Vovky*, published several issues of their bulletin *Vovchoiu tropoiu* (Along the Wolf's Path); because the majority of this fraternity lived in Canada, Ukrainians from both Argentina and Canada contributed. As elsewhere, these publications depended on knowledge of Ukrainian, but fluent command of the language existed only for a limited time among the immigrants.

### *Statistics*

Plast members in Argentina	1949	1954
Junior scouts	0	105
Boy and girl scouts	18 8 boys and 10 girls	92
Rover-rank scouts	15 10 males and 5 females	34
Scout-seniors	10	23
Unassigned	4	–
Total	47	254

On 24 July 1954, the First Plast Assembly in Argentina elected a KPS and KPR; the assembly marked the conclusion of the formative period of Plast in Argentina.

## Next phase

In the mid-1950s an economic crisis struck the country, and many recent Ukrainian immigrants, particularly members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, left for Canada and the USA. This had a major impact on Plast; it became difficult to conduct regular Plast activities, as membership sank to about 100, and Plast groups in the suburbs of Buenos Aires were either liquidated or consolidated. In an effort to counteract membership losses, the KPS that was elected in 1956 established a branch in Saranda, which initially had two patrols of scouts and three dens of junior scouts, and another group in Lavolli. Scout leaders travelled to these two branches from central Buenos Aires, and when youngsters reached older scout age, they became members of the Buenos Aires branch. The suburban branches eventually disappeared, but Plast membership stabilized at 120–40.

Despite these problems, camping and hiking activity continued. In 1954, the largest ever number of campers (114) attended *Nenasytets*; it was led by Bohdan Halaichuk and Mykhailo Wasylyk and was divided into sub-camps for the boy and girl and junior scouts. By 1958, the number of campers dropped to about 60.

### *Camping*

In 1960 the first non-stationary camp took place, led by Wasylyk; seven older boy scouts were taken hiking through distant Misiones, an area where the first Ukrainian immigrants had settled decades earlier. Rev. Kovalchuk of the Basilian Fathers helped in the organization of this camp. In the 1960s, camps were held in several different locations, most often on the property of the Ivanytsky family; leaders included B. Halaichuk, M. Wasylyk, and O. Volovyna. By early 1965 it was clear that Plast needed its own camping site, and KPS purchased the property in Punto India from the Basilian Order. Half of the price of 700 ARS was paid by KPS, and the other half by loans from two scout-seniors, R. Ilnytsky and M. Wasylyk.

The campsite was particularly suitable for junior scouts, and during the 1960s–70s their camps were usually led by B. Halaichuk, R. Seliansky, and O. Volovyna. The girl and boy scouts, however, sought more challenging sites: several times, they camped on Argentina's Atlantic coast, with scout leaders M. Mylusia, I. Wasylyk, Kh. Seredniak, M. Lytvyn, H. Sokil, and Y. Fedyshyn. In 1979 the boy scouts even ventured outside of



*Camp participants at camp Nenasytets, 1953.*

Argentina to camp in Uruguay. In 1986, the first co-ed UPU camp was organized, taking place in Piriapolis, Uruguay. In 1988, both junior and boy and girl scout divisions, numbering 51 in all, camped at the Plast site. In the 1990s, the number of camp participants declined to 30–40; most troubling was the fact that there were few or no junior scouts.

In 1989, an attempt was made, led by Wasylyk, to return to the more rigid approach to running a camp. But clearly the younger members preferred the easy-going, relaxed approach rather than the traditional disciplined and character-building approach to camp programs. As a result, tensions grew between the older and younger Plast members.

In 1990, with members of the younger generation in charge, the Plast camps emphasized sports. They attracted 20 junior scouts and 32 boy and girl scouts. In 1991, when Ukraine became independent, a wave of enthusiasm and patriotism rolled through the Ukrainian community, and the number of scouts at camp rose somewhat—29 in 1991 and 30 in 1992. However, the UPN numbers remained small; of the 30 scouts camping in 1992, only five were junior scouts.

### *Premises*

In 1965 Plast moved its premises to the newly-constructed Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral on 3960 Roman Falcon, where it used the classrooms for its activities. At this time, the gradual weakening in the childrens' command of Ukrainian became ever more noticeable. Some blamed the departure of many of the intelligentsia; others thought that the problem lay with the weakening of the Saturday schools. But tensions arose between the Ukrainian Catholic Church and Plast; as a result, it was decided to look for new premises for the Ukrainian scouts.

A suitable building was found at 2868 Enrique Rodo, close to the cathedral. It was purchased with considerable financial help from the Shafraniuk family of Toronto, who had once lived in Buenos Aires. The extensive renovations took five years and greatly interfered with Plast activities—including the resignation of the KPS. There was no scout leadership training during most of this time, and no general assemblies. Finally, in November 1970 the renovation of the Plast *domivka* was completed. Considering the very high rates of inflation in Argentina, the completion of work on the building was considered a major success, and Plast's Chief Scout Yurij Starosolsky travelled from the USA for the inauguration. As part of this event, M. Lytvyn, [?] Sterniuk, and others received the St. George Medal (silver) for their work on the *domivka* project.

### *Scout leadership training*

During the years of Plast activity, it was evident that major changes were occurring in the membership. By the 1970s, the declining command of Ukrainian among the Argentina-born scouts became ever more obvious. To combat these trends, KPS stressed a return to Plast traditions, and placed a renewed emphasis on training scout leaders. In 1968, M. Lytvyn and B. Ivaniuk held a week-long training seminar for scoutmasters, and Lytvyn was sent to the USA for additional training. In 1971 she led a one-week course for both junior and boy and girl scout leaders. In 1974 and 1978, R. Seliansky and I. Wasylyk conducted training for junior scout leaders. Thereafter, there were no courses for a long time, not until 1986, when the KPS added a training officer to its executive and organized several courses at the *domivka*. In 1991, a major effort was made when four males and three females travelled to the USA for training at the *Lisova Shkola* and *Shkola Bulavnykh* scout leader camps.

### *Community participation*

Plast made every effort to participate in Ukrainian and general Argentinian community events. In 1959, 60 Plast members joined scouts from other captive nations—Hungarians, Armenians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, and Slovenians—in forming an International Scout Bureau, to protect them from discrimination by government authorities. This group held a jamboree with 312 participants, in which the Ukrainians played a prominent role.

In September 1968, Josyf Cardinal Slipyj, Patriarch of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, travelled to Argentina to visit his flock, and Plast had a special audience with him. In December 1971, a monument to Taras Shevchenko was erected in Buenos Aires, for which Plast members had contributed funds. In 1979, a well-attended celebration marking the 30th anniversary of Plast in Argentina took place; greetings arrived from Patriarch Josyf and the KPS of USA, Canada, and Australia. Another noteworthy event occurred in 1980, when youth organizations such as Plast, SUM, and OUM organized a mini-Olympics to protest the Games held in Moscow. About 50 Plast members were active in organizing this event, but in general Plast's relations with SUM were not especially close.

### *Brazil*

In view of the fact that a large Ukrainian immigrant community existed in Brazil, attempts were made to organize Plast units there. At the suggestion of Slava Rubel of the HPB, Argentina Plast activists M. Lytvyn and I. Wasylyk were asked to hold an introductory seminar about Plast in Curitiba. It took place on 31 August–3 September 1990. However, few Brazilian-Ukrainians seemed to be interested in scouting, and their command of Ukrainian was minimal, so this initiative was unsuccessful.



*Plast group hiking in the Andes Mountains, 2004. Visiting from Canada is Oksana Zakydalsky (at right).*

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At the beginning of the 21th century Plast in Argentina continued to be active, albeit small in size. By now it was being led by the second and third generation of scouts, almost all of whom were born in Argentina. The KPS was comprised of a younger generation, with Andrij Agres as president and deputies Roman Kluba and Yuriy Nazaruk. The secretary was Tamara Zaoborna and the national scoutmaster was Ivan Dmytriv, while Natalia Dmytriv led the junior scouts; the treasurer was Oleksander Rakorni. The KPR consisted of longstanding Plast members.

Major changes had occurred; only a few of the younger generation had a command of Ukrainian, and the Argentinian organization had only about 100 active members—about 20 junior scouts and 20 boy and girl scouts, and the rest were rover-rank scouts and scout-seniors. On the positive side, Plast in Argentina owned its *domivka* and its own camping site. Camps were held annually, and other Plast and Ukrainian holidays were regularly observed. Plast in Argentina was well organized, and it maintained ties with the НРВ. Most promising was the fact that a new generation now led the organization, and this indicated that it still had a future.



## Chapter 16

# Plast in Germany

After the massive postwar emigration, during which the vast majority of the Ukrainian DPs left the camps and scattered throughout the world, only about 20,000 Ukrainians remained in Germany. Many were elderly and ill; others, for a variety of reasons, did not want to leave Europe. Some of those who remained were involved in the many Ukrainian organizations and institutions that had been based in Germany since the start of WWII. Initially, many stayed in the depopulated camps, but in time the Ukrainians spread out to find jobs in the reviving Germany economy. Their legal status, however, was unclear. Although they had extensive rights, many did not obtain full German citizenship, especially the older generation.

In place of the numerous schools of the DP era, a system of Saturday schools was organized, and even a boarding school in Munich. Thus, the Ukrainians established a unique entity in Germany—neither immigrant nor native, and, moreover, consciously Ukrainian.

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Initially, the goal of the Ukrainians in Germany was to preserve as much as possible of the range and scope of what had been organized in the DP years. In the absence of the critical masses of people, however, this required major restructuring, and since their demographic situation was not about to change soon, they had to prepare for the long term by looking after their youth. Consequently, those who sought to preserve what was left of Plast focused first and foremost on the summer camps. Following an initial, rather provisional national conference on 23 March 1952, they organized a camp with 58 participants at a mountain resort near Lake Starnberg, named *Dniprovyy Lyman* in Ukrainian. This camp marked the beginning of Plast in Germany in the postwar era.

The second national conference, on 20 December 1953, took a more thorough approach. It elected a new executive for Plast in Germany, consisting of Damian Pelensky, a highly experienced Plast leader from the 1920s, Ivan Kerestil as national scout leader for boys, Vira Tuz-iak as national scout leader for girls, Markian Zayats as treasurer, and Osy Danko as secretary. It was also determined that 196 Plast members remained in Germany, most of whom lived in Munich; other cities and towns where Plast members lived included Augsburg, Göttingen, Ingol-



stadt, Mannheim, Neu Ulm, and Haidenau. Clearly, most of the Ukrainian scouts were in southern Germany, that is, in Bavaria.

In 1954 the Plast executive found a camping site that they could rent. It was called Hochland, a nature preserve near the village of Königsdorf in Bavaria. As it turned out, this site would host Plast camps for decades to come. Financing was always a problem, and often the shortage of funds was resolved with assistance from Plast members in North America.

Subsequent years proved to be surprisingly active for Plast in Germany: weekly meetings, participation in various Ukrainian community celebrations, caroling and mummer plays (*Vertep*) at Christmas. In addition, the summer camps increased in popularity; in 1954, a scout camp named *Khortytsia* had 28 participants. The following year, a camp named *Orlyne Hnizdo*, lasting from 9 to 25 August, attracted 11 boys and 16 girls from the junior division as well as 50 boys and 66 girls from the scout division. This enhanced camping activity led to a growth in membership numbers: by February 1954 Plast in Germany had 212 members registered, 113 girls and 89 boys, and in 1955 the membership increased to 280.

The numbers were nonetheless rather small, and financial support was needed. The Plast executive turned to the German scouting groups. At that time, there were three scouting organizations in Germany—Catholic, Lutheran, and secular, while Plast accepted both Catholic and Orthodox members. In 1955 the Plast boys' troops allied themselves—under strict and extensive autonomy—with the secular German scouts, and on 28 March 1957 the Plast girls' troops joined the German girl scouts, with equal autonomy. The Plast scouts were allowed to use their own uniforms and camping sites, and the requirement to pay dues was waived. As a result, Plast in Germany gained a legal framework for its activity. Meanwhile, it maintained its relationship with Plast in other countries, and stayed a member of CUPO, following the directives for the activity of its KPs.

The HPB proclaimed the years 1956 and 1957 to be Jubilee years celebrating 45 years of Plast and 70th birthday of its founder, Dr. O. Tysovsky. These two anniversaries were celebrated with a UMPZ at Hochland, Tysovsky himself participated and performed a ceremony of renewal of the Plast Oath.

During the early 1960s, much of the Plast activity followed the traditional, self-contained patterns. The Plast members in Germany also had the advantage of being quite close to major scouting organizations in England, France, and Germany, and of being able to participate in their activities. In 1957, a group of eight Plast members from Germany, including scout leaders Rudko, Mryts, and Hilitaichuk, attended the 9th



*Celebrating the 45th anniversary of Plast, Voice of America anchor Vasyl Markus, himself a member of Plast USA, interviews Plast founder Oleksander Tysovsky and Head of Plast Germany Damian Pelensky, 1957.*

World Scouting Jamboree in England; their camp was visited by Lord and Madame Baden-Powell. Moreover, along with other scout leaders, Rudko was invited to a reception given by Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Palace. Meanwhile, three Plast girl scouts participated in the World Camp of Girl Guides, also held in England. In 1963, Ukrainian scouts from Germany, led by Figol and Rebet, were part of the Plast delegation at the International Scout Jamboree in Greece. The scouts from Germany also used the occasion to visit Patriarch Josef Cardinal Slipyj in Rome. Financial help for their participation in the jamboree in Greece came from Plast members from all over the world. Prior to the Jamboree, the Ukrainian scouts participated in a preparatory camp at Hochland.

In Germany, Plast organized a marine camp on the North Sea and a training camp for scout leaders, directed by Teodosii Samotulka. As time passed, new ideas were entertained. In a lecture presented to Plast members by Rudko, he argued that they must consider the impact of the German milieu on Plast and pay more attention to the views of its Plast younger members. All agreed that a strong Plast center (*oseredok*) must be built up, presumably in Munich, and that an effort should be made to obtain premises for the scouts. There was also agreement that better contacts should be established with other émigré scout organizations, and that Plast should focus its community participation on activities directly related to its mandate. Finally, it was emphasized that Plast meetings should follow the traditional pattern, and that a systematic approach should be taken regarding moving up in the ranks. This soul-searching indicated that all was not well with the scouting organization.



*Marta Mialkowska in Ukrainian costume at the World Camp of Girl Guides in England, 1957.*

Signs of the crisis became more obvious in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1971, after the death of Korzhan, head of the KPS, no one could be found to lead the scout troops. Fortunately, I. Kozak volunteered to be interim national leader for the girl scouts, and the boys received help when Petro Sodoł, an American army officer stationed in Germany, took over as national scout leader for boys. Nonetheless, it was clear that the old generation of Plast activists was passing on, and it was extremely difficult to find younger scouts to take their place. In the early 1970s, it seemed that Plast in Germany was in a state of paralysis.

Eventually a new national executive was formed, led by Ihor Zubenko. One of its initiatives in 1974 was to organize the first ski camp. However, Zubenko's report to the CUPO in 1975 was rather pessimistic. Membership in Plast Germany was

declining (in 1975 it dropped to 209), there were very few junior scouts, the rover-rank scouts were disorganized, and, what was most pressing, and there were no young scout leaders.

Despite these problems, the new executive worked hard and made progress, and was able to mark the 25th anniversary of Plast Germany's internationally known camps. In two specific morale-raising events, Plast members in Germany and England organized a joint camp, and secondly, they were visited by the Plast Chief Scout, Yuriy Starosolsky. Cooperation grew at the international level, as Plast members in Germany were involved in attempts to organize Plast units in France, and also went to Plast camps in England, Canada, and USA. In 1977, German and English Plast members organized camps in France and England. In 1978, Plast members from Germany travelled to Canada to participate in the UMPZ in Edmonton and the Rocky Mountains. Other Plast members became involved in defending the rights of Ukrainian dissidents in the USSR. Meanwhile, Marko Horbatsch and Ihor Zubal ran regional meetings for Plast members who lived farther away from Munich.

In 1981, a new national executive was elected, led by M. Salak. It agreed to the proposal of the HPB to host the concluding phase of celebrations of the 70th anniversary of Plast at Hochland on 15 August 1983. This would also mark 30 years of Plast camping at this site. The event attracted Plast members from Argentina, Australia, USA, Canada, Britain, Spain, Belgium, France, and Italy, as well as the Chief Scout and other Plast leaders—over 300 participants in total. The German KPS documented the event in a commemorative booklet. In all, the celebration of this milestone was a great success and an encouragement for Plast in Germany.

In subsequent years, Plast continued to play an active role in the Ukrainian community. Plast in Germany sent a delegation to the funeral of Cardinal Josyf Slipyj in Rome, and another delegation (comprising I. Kozak, A. Figol, H. Komarynsky, and M. Salak) to the CUPO at *Soyuzivka* in the USA. Ski camps in Germany attracted many scouts from other countries, and in 1985–86 they found a new location at Schefau in Tyrolia (Austria). Nonetheless, with only 173 members, other activities were at a minimum. The majority of activity was concentrated in Munich, though a mixed scout troop also existed in Frankfurt. A group of scouts at the Minor Seminary in Rome existed for a short time under the auspices of the German KPS. In 1987, Plast Germany organized a 20-person group, led by the head of KPS, Marta Mialkowska, that participated in the international jamboree at Grafton, ON, Canada.

Among other community-based events in which Plast participated was an imposing ceremony marking the Millennium of the Christianization of Kyivan Rus. A Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Cardinal Liubachivsky, Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, in the biggest cathedral in Munich, accompanied by two German cardinals, senior Bavarian officials, and numerous Ukrainian community representatives.

A nerve-wracking episode occurred around this time. The German authorities decided that Ukrainian scouts henceforth were to be forbidden from holding their camps at the Hochland site, in order to preserve the environment. Luckily, the local Germans came to the rescue. They emphasized that in the decades during which the Ukrainian scouts had camped at Hochland, they behaved in an exemplary manner and always left the grounds as they found them. Consequently, the government reversed its decision and allowed the Ukrainians to continue camping in this area.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the Communist hold on Eastern Europe crumbled, a new era began for the Ukrainian scouts in Germany. Of all the countries where Plast existed at the time, the Ukrainian scouts in Germany were closest to the dramatic events unfolding, and they could respond most readily to the growing interest in Plast among their Ukrain-

ian compatriots in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and eventually in Ukraine. In 1990, seven young Ukrainians from the Prešov region in Slovakia attended Plast camp in Germany to learn more about it.

In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's declaration of independence, the members of Plast in Germany were involved in the revitalization of Plast in Poland. And at the behest of the HPB, two scouts from Germany, Taras Rebet and Roman Stelmakh, helped organize the first Plast camp in Poland. Also in 1991, new scouts from Ukraine camped at Hochland, and Plast members from Germany travelled to Ukraine, where they participated in the organization of the first Plast camps there. In 1992, Ludmila Darmohraj of the HPB conducted a training camp at Hochland for Ukrainian scouts from Slovakia, Poland, and Ukraine. As a side effect, this activity helped to raise the membership of Plast in Germany somewhat (184 members that year).

The ties of Ukrainian scouts in Germany with those in Ukraine continued to grow. In 1993, the German KPS purchased premises in Kyiv for the use of Plast in Ukraine. Scouts from Germany, led by Mialkowska, took part in the first UMPZ in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the annual ski camp attracted more and more visiting scouts from Poland and Ukraine. Influenced by these developments, at its 20th conference Plast in Germany changed its name from the Association of Ukrainian Scouts in Germany to the Plast Ukrainian Scouting Organization in Germany.

At this time, the last old-timers retired, including Volodymyr Komarynsky, following 43 years of dedicated service as KPS treasurer. Membership continued to grow, increasing to 192 in 1995. Another encouraging development was that Plast began to receive a financial sub-sidy from the city of Munich. Olia Tkachenko, who served as the liaison between Plast and the municipal authorities, contributed greatly to this accomplishment; in 1997 she was elected head of the KPS. Meanwhile, contacts with Ukraine continued to grow. In 1997, 30 boy and girl scouts from Rivne attended the summer camp at Hochland; a year later, 13 German Plast scouts attended the UMPZ in Winnipeg, Canada.

Plast in Germany had a great asset in its close contacts with Plast in Ukraine. Between 1999 and 2001 the camp directors and most patrol leaders at Hochland came from Ukraine. Plast in Germany returned the favor when Tkachenko collected funds to purchase two minibuses for the use of Plast in Ukraine. Tkachenko was very active in marshaling support for Ukraine. In 2002 she took 40 Ukrainian scouts from Germany to Ukraine for the Plast jamboree that was held there. In the meantime, Plast membership in Germany grew, and small Plast affiliate groups also



wosm (World Organization of the Scout Movement) banner at joint camp in Hochland in Germany, 2008. Kneeling at left is Orest Mialkowskyj, former Head of Plast Germany, kneeling at right is Viacheslav Stebnytsky, former Head of Plast Ukraine and long-time scout leader at joint camps in Germany, standing at right is Oksana Mykytychak, Head of Plast Germany.

appeared in Vienna and in Belgium, increasing the total Plast membership in Germany to 198 in 2000.

In 2006, Olya Tkachenko, Borys Frankevych, and Orest Mialkowskyj attended the CUPO in Kyiv. They opposed the militarization of Plast, which some Ukrainians desired, and supported a resolution stating that it was not in the interests of Plast and should not be allowed. Tkachenko continued organizing material aid for Ukraine, especially children's hospitals.

The year 2008 marked a historic event for Plast, as for the first time the camp in Hochland raised the banner of the World Organization for the Scouting Movement. Twenty-eight scouts from Ukraine, led by Viacheslav Stebnytsky, were participating in the camp and brought the banner with them. The National Organization of Scouts of Ukraine (NOSU) had been officially accepted into the international scouting fraternity, and Plast members from Ukraine were allowed to be members of NOSU.

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After the postwar refugee Ukrainians left the former DP camps, it did not seem likely that the 20,000 Ukrainians who remained in Germany would be able to support a scouting organization. But although their numbers were small, they were a very nationally conscious community. And Ukraine was not far away. Therefore, the idea that someday they might return to their homeland no doubt played a role in sustaining Plast. Economically weaker than the Ukrainian DP communities in USA and Canada, the Ukrainian scouts in Germany depended greatly on their help in the early years. Moreover, as with all immigrant societies, they faced the problem of assimilation (although in Germany it was not as severe as in the USA). On the other hand, they had the advantage of close proximity to Poland and Ukraine. Eventually, Plast in Germany was transformed from an organization that sought help to one that provided it to Ukrainian scouts in Poland and Ukraine. Indeed, Plast in Germany played a key role in transmitting the traditional Plast forms, methods, and values back to Poland and Ukraine. This relationship was mutually beneficial, helping the Ukrainian scouts in Germany as well as those in their ancestral homeland.



*German Plast members at the International Scout Jamboree in Marathon, Greece, 1963.*

## Chapter 17

# Plast in Poland

The first appearance of Plast in Poland was unexpected. Given the historically conflicted relationship between Poles and Ukrainians, and especially after the bitter conflicts of the WWII period, Ukrainians in Poland were widely disliked. However, key changes occurred as the Communist system collapsed. In fact, during the 1980s many Ukrainians sided with the anti-Communist forces, and as a result they gained Polish allies. A Ukrainian (Volodymyr Mokryj) was elected to the Polish parliament, the Byzantine-rite Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church was fully legalized as a separate eparchy, and the Ukrainian cultural association USKT (formerly known as the Organization of Ukrainians in Poland, or OUP) was granted official status.

\* \* \*

### Origins

The idea of renewing Plast (for it had existed in Peremyshl [Przemyśl] and other Galician towns under Polish rule in the 1920s) arose among Ukrainian students in Gdańsk, who included Petro Tyma and Petro Pawlyszyn. They were greatly helped by Borys Gudziak, a Ukrainian priest and *plastun* originally from the USA, who was working at the Basilian Fathers monastery in Warsaw. In 1990, a group of Plast enthusiasts decided to renew the Ukrainian scouting organization in Poland, and organized a summer camp, with some help from the Polish scouts (ZHR). It took place from 2 to 18 July 1990 in the Mazury region, on the property of the Boczmak family.

On 30 December 1990, at a conference in Bilyi Bir (Biały Bór), a KPS for Poland was elected (Tyma, Petuch, and Stremnicki). City branches were also established in Szczecin, Borowa, Słupsk, Przemyśl, and Legnica. The 20 conference delegates also made plans to organize a scout leadership training camp. Plast in Poland, however, was not an independent organization. For legal reasons, it was registered as a youth branch of the OUP. This was also a practical solution, because it gave Plast access to the organization's headquarters, and to its newspaper. The Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church



lent its support as well, and even appointed a chaplain for the scouts. Although there was a lack of trained scout leaders, and no student volunteers or parents' auxiliary to lend support, Plast in Poland did enjoy some advantages.



*5th Plast conference in Warsaw, 1997.*

It received strong support from outside Poland, especially from Germany, the USA, and Canada, and benefited from its proximity to Ukraine, where Plast had also revived and was already active. Scouts from both Ukraine and Poland attended the Scouts' Jamboree in Olsztyn in August 1991, as Ukrainian scouts. Moreover, Plast members from Germany frequently participated in the camps of Plast in Poland. Therefore, in 2000 when Plast in Poland celebrated its 10th anniversary, it had reason to be proud.

Nevertheless, there were problems maintaining the scouting organization in Poland. Because Ukrainians were widely dispersed, living mostly in small towns and villages, there were no strong city branches. Scout leaders were very difficult to find, and the children tended to be of mixed ages within their dens and patrols, which did not facilitate cohesion.

It was not surprising, therefore, that with no one to follow up on the work of the Plast pioneers in Poland, by the mid-1990s it was in crisis. Although there were a considerable number of Ukrainians in Poland, they were scattered and unable to provide a strong demographic base for Plast. Not surprisingly, early hopes that Plast would be an antidote to the strong pressure to assimilate into Polish society were dashed.

Despite these serious difficulties, a new generation of Plast activists appeared and proposed ways of improving the situation. They formed a few strong, albeit small, city branches, and placed great emphasis on holding regular camps in various locations in the southeastern, formerly indigenous Ukrainian territories—usually two per year to accommodate the various age-based divisions. A camping site was acquired near Mryhlody, in the ethnic Lemko region of southeastern Poland. The local Ukrainians spent much time and effort to preserve abandoned Ukrain-

ian churches and cemeteries. And importantly, good relations were established with other Polish scouting organizations.

## Divisions

### *Junior scout division (UPN)*

The most active Plast division in Poland was the junior scouts of the UPN. Packs were originally established in Gdańsk, Szczecin, Węgosz, Giżycko, Przemyśl, Słupsk, Kruglany, Banie Mazurskie, Bytów, Górowo Iławeckie, Warsaw, Sanok, and Biały Bór. However, by 1994 this number shrank to Bytów, Warsaw, Legnica, Gdańsk, Giżycko, and Słupsk, and by 2006 to Górowo Iławeckie, Słupsk, and Biały Bór.

This division of Plast in Poland worked closely with the *Lemko Vatra* (Łemkowska Watra) festival held every summer, and even had its own vocal performing ensemble, called *Veselyi Prominchyk*. The Plast work with the junior scouts was strongly supported by the Ukrainian Catholic church, and many of its young priests participated in the Plast summer camps. Indeed, in 2006 at the 6th KPZ in Gdańsk, two Greco-Catholic leaders, Metropolitan Ivan Marciniak and Bishop Roman Juszcak, were made honorary members of Plast.

### *Boy and girl scout division (UPU)*

Boy and girl scout patrols were organized in the early 1990s in Szczecin, Słupsk, Przemyśl, Legnica, Bytów, and Zembożyczi. The KPZ made an effort to spread the Plast idea into regions of Poland where it was unknown. For example, in 1995 it organized a camp in the village of Kozlyky in the Podlachia region.

Since Plast was relatively new, there were no organized rover-rank scout divisions of Plast in Poland, although in general, the executive and scout leaders were of the young-adult age.

## Scout leadership training

From the outset, priority was given to training leaders for the junior division. In 1994, sixteen scouts from Poland (and four from Ukraine) took part in an *Orlynyi Kruh* junior scout council (ROV No. 111), led by Ludmila Darmohraj of the USA. In 2006 the 205th ROV took place in Słupsk, led by Julia Żdanowycz. In 2008, scout leadership training took place in Krynica,

led by Mykola Muzala of Ukraine. Older Plast boy and girl scouts were sent for training as camp counsellors to Ukraine or the USA at the *Lisova Shkola* and *Shkola Bulavnykh* scout leader camps, respectively.

It should be noted that Plast members were also active in their local Ukrainian communities, both secular and religious. They helped to organize events commemorating the history of Ukrainians in Poland, like the incarcerations in 1946 at the concentration camp at Jaworzno or the devastating Operation Wisła of 1947. Plast members were also active in the Ukrainian cultural festivals in Sopot and the *Lemko Vatra*. A number of Plast activists such as Petro Tyma, Mariusz Babiak, Iryna Boruszczak, and Arkadi Putko came to occupy leadership positions in the OUP.

\* \* \*

Given the long history of Polish-Ukrainian conflicts, the emergence of Plast in Poland took place in most difficult conditions. In addition, the widespread dispersal of Ukrainians in post-wwII Poland made the organization of a Ukrainian scouting organization in Poland very difficult. Therefore, it was remarkable that Plast in Poland was not only able to emerge but continued to exist. Despite the impact of assimilation, it indicated the high level of commitment of Ukrainians in Poland to their own heritage and to their own scouting organization. It was also a reflection of the democratization of Polish society as a whole, which in the past would not have tolerated a minority youth organization such as Plast. In the final analysis, it demonstrated that scouting among young people whose backgrounds were similar exercised a strong appeal.



*Scout leadership training, with a guest from Ukraine, 1998.*

## Chapter 18

# Plast in Slovakia

*Orest Dzulynsky*

The story of Plast in Slovakia goes back to the late 1920s and early 1930s, when Transcarpathia and the eastern part of Slovakia became part of Czechoslovakia. The Ukrainian national awakening in Transcarpathia had a great influence on Ukrainian sentiments in eastern Slovakia, which historically was ethnic Ukrainian territory and whose residents prevailingly called themselves *Rusyny* (Ruthenians). One of the results of this newly awakened national awareness in eastern Slovakia was the establishment of Plast groups, mostly in the Prešov region. Plast became popular among Ukrainian students who studied abroad, particularly in Transcarpathia (see chapter 4) and Prague. But as a patriotic and God-fearing youth organization, Plast in Slovakia became nonexistent after WWII, when Czechoslovakia became a Soviet satellite behind the Iron Curtain.

Then, towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, democratic processes that began to develop in Eastern Europe had a positive influence on the development of civil society and its typical organizations. In Czechoslovakia, a few individuals remembered the Plast activity in Czechoslovakia and Transcarpathia (part of Czechoslovakia at that time) during the 1930s and were encouraged to reestablish it in Ukrainian communities in Slovakia. Given that Ukrainians in Slovakia were a minority local population, the situation here differed from other countries where Plast was established after the influx of new immigrants in 1949–50.

The initiative group included Pavlo Durkot, Ivan Kravec, Serhij Panchak, and Sviatoslav, Ihor, and Olena Dovhovykh. On 22 May 1991, this group registered Plast with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Slovakia, and on 28 September 1991 an inaugural assembly was held to adopt the bylaws for Plast of Slovakia and appoint a KPS. The national executive comprised L. Dovhovykh (President), P. Durkot, I. Dovhovykh, B. Kopchak, B. Beheni, O. Dovhovykh, and L. Sholtys. For the KPR, A. Kocur (Chair), M. Rybak, and M. Hanko were elected.

A general plan for further development was established at the second assembly in 1994 (attended by Orest Hawryluk, head of the НРВ). However, with a scattered Ukrainian population and chronic lack of scout leaders, it was difficult to conduct regular Plast scouting activity.

Consequently, the KPS focused on Ukrainian heritage preservation among the children, organizing Ukrainian schools, concerts, and children's camps. The most popular and well attended were yearly camps called *Karpaty*, with programs emphasizing Ukrainian culture rather than scouting—although some hiking was included. During the rest of the year there was little regular scouting activity, including a lack of weekly meetings.

Individual members participated in scout camps and jamborees with other Ukrainian communities in neighboring countries.

Although regular Plast activity in Slovakia was lacking, contrary to CUPO directives, Plast in Slovakia, with a membership of 141, was accepted as a member organization in CUPO in October 1994. At that time, Slovakia was a part of Czechoslovakia, which later split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

For a variety of reasons, however, Plast in Slovakia did not experience significant growth or development.

What minimal activity there was is certainly thanks to the efforts and dedication of the Dovhovych family and Maria Rebryk in Bratislava. The CUPO membership of Plast in Slovakia has been under review on several occasions, but no action has been taken.

References:

1. Dovhovych, Lev. 'Slovachchyna,' *Al'manakh 100-littia Plastu*. (New York–Toronto–Lviv 2012), p. 318



*Visit to Andy Warhol Museum, Medzilaborce, during the Karpaty camp, 1994.*

## Chapter 19

# Renewal of Plast in Ukraine\*

The renewal of Plast in Ukraine was the culmination of a long, complex history that had started with the establishment of Plast in Western Ukraine, followed its stubborn and successful existence in the Western diaspora, and finally witnessed its return to the homeland at the end of the 20th century. It is striking how for almost one hundred years, the Ukrainian scouting organization experienced a great variety of very different and difficult conditions—and yet, to a large extent it remained true to the values it espoused when it was founded. This was no doubt a clear acknowledgement of the lasting value of the scouting experience.

Not surprisingly, the Ukraine to which Plast returned in the 1990s was very different from that which the Ukrainian scouts had left in the 1940s. It had experienced Soviet rule with its many controlling and penetrating features. Many of these sought to create a different, Soviet-type youth. Yet despite the great changes that Soviet rule brought, the return of Plast to its homeland—and Western Ukraine in particular—was surprisingly rapid and largely successful. It was one more proof that the roots from which Plast had originally sprung were still very much alive and fertile.

In the prewar period, Plast had reached its high point in Eastern Galicia, which was the center of its activity during the 1920s. After being banned by the Polish government in 1930, Plast existed for nearly a decade illegally (Clandestine Plast) until the outbreak of WWII, and even experienced a minor rebirth (under a different name). However, this was a very limited form of the original. In the final stage of the war, many individuals who had once belonged to Plast fled before the advancing Soviets, and revived Plast in the DP camps of Germany and Austria.

The Soviet regime that ruled Western Ukraine for over 40 years (since 1944) realized the importance of inculcating its values in the young. This meant that they were urged to enroll in two monolithic state organizations: the Pioneers (ages 10–14) and the Komsomol (ages 14–28). In 1986, the Komsomol had 42 million members in the USSR and 6,742,000 in Ukraine, encompassing about 2/3 of all boys and girls. No other youth organizations—or any mention of them—were allowed to exist, so knowledge about Plast was repressed. Very few were able to recall anything about Ukrainian scouting as it had existed in prewar times.

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\* Revised by Tanya Dzulynsky.

## Early initiatives

As might be expected, in the beginning the pioneers of the renewed Plast were under constant observation by Soviet internal security organizations. The renewal of Plast in Ukraine also attracted the interest of Western media, including Radio Liberty and Voice of America as well as Germany's Deutsche Welle.

### *Kalynets and UCDF*

The collapsing Soviet system created an environment in which new organizations were appearing or being rejuvenated. The desire to learn about Plast grew in particular after an article by Julian Redko entitled "Ukrainian Scouting" appeared in June 1988 in the self-published almanac *Yevshan-zillia*, edited in Lviv by Iryna and Ihor Kalynets. The first specific attempt at reviving Plast came from the Ukrainian Christian Democratic Front, which in January of 1989 established a subdivision called "Plast." On 21–23 April of that year, they first organized a two-day outing near the village of Tserkovna, Dolyna district, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. Of the 33 participants, five were camp leaders and 27 were young "Plast" members; the camp director was Roman Chekalsky. Then, on 24 July they organized a Plast-type camp in Horodok district, Lviv oblast, with 50 participants and 11 counselors, again under Chekalsky's leadership. This camp did not escape the notice of Soviet authorities; considered too nationalistic, it was disbanded and the leaders were arrested. The strong action by the Soviet authorities provoked public protests in the city of Lviv, where the memory of pre-WWII Plast still lingered.

### *Darewych and Yukhnovsky*

In September 1988, the Ukrainian physicist and political leader Ihor Yukhnovsky visited Toronto on the invitation of Jurij Darewych of York University, who was also a physicist and moreover a longstanding member of Plast in Canada. Darewych showed Yukhnovsky with Plast literature and with other leading members of Plast in Canada. Yukhnovsky, a reputed academic, was well regarded in Soviet Ukrainian government and patriotically minded circles.<sup>1</sup>



*Prof. Jurij Darewych and Prof. Ihor Yukhnovsky, catalysts in the renewal of Plast in Ukraine.*

Being also director of the Eureka Junior Academy of Sciences in Lviv (LMAN), he cared passionately about the development of youth and their interaction with the world outside of the Soviet Union.

1989

Initially, the LMAN invited a group of Plast scouts from Canada for a visit. In July 1989 Oksana Zakydalsky brought fourteen members of the Toronto and Montreal branches to Lviv. In their interactions, presentations, and interviews information about Plast was disseminated throughout Western Ukraine. Next, the following key developments occurred as separate initiatives, more or less simultaneously:<sup>2,3,4</sup>

1. In October 1989, Yukhnovsky assembled a task force in Lviv to organize Plast. The group included representatives of several influential organizations: Oleksander Kryskiv (scientist and *turyzm* activist, namely, hiking and camping), Levko Zakharchyshyn (Tovarystvo Leva), Mykhailo Kosmyn and Oleksandra Bartyn (Lviv Department of Education), Ivanna Borodchuk (LMAN), Oleh Karavansky (Western Research Center of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (ANU)), Ihor Derkach (ANU Physics and Mechanics Institute), Yuri Zyma (Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Association), and Ihor Hryniv (Lviv Komsomol). Yukhnovsky was the main promoter and flagbearer, while Kryskiv was the practical organizer. They began by inviting over 30 people to a “Plast School” for potential future scout leaders; the general director was Bohdan Heneha and the program director was Bohdan Hasiuk—both would play an invaluable role in the revival of Plast in Ukraine. The program consisted of seminars and workshops on the philosophy and logistics of the Plast program, and emphasized the importance of scouting values. Four times a week they gathered for one-hour sessions. The Western Research Center hosted lectures on Ukrainian history, cul-



*Bohdan Heneha, Ihor Yukhnovsky, and Bohdan Hasiuk were among the first leaders in the renewal of Plast.*



ture, art, and literature, while sports such as sailing, swimming, and karate took place at the Institute of Physics and Mechanics and a military stadium. The Plast School culminated with a camp in the Carpathian Mountains in July 1990.

2. Independently, the Lviv civic youth group *Tovarystvo Leva* began organizing youth in schools in the autumn of 1989. Their efforts were enhanced when two Plast members from Canada (Oksana Zakydalsky and Oksana Wynnycky) visited Lviv and delivered a quantity of Plast literature to Lev Zakharchyshyn, president of *Tovarystvo Leva*. The youth that registered at this time would become the first Plast troops in Ukraine.
3. In Lutsk, Oleh Pokalchuk organized and registered a troop with Vasyl Stus as their patron. They were in contact with *Tovarystvo Leva* in Lviv, but their program was somewhat more militaristic.
4. In Kyiv, under the leadership of Volodymyr Skorobsky, in 1989 a group of Ukrainian activists used the Plast manual *Zhyttia v Plasti* as the basis for organizing a leadership training course for several scout leaders, and began scouting activities with a mixed group of children.

By December 1989, the leaders of the various groups around Lviv had met, and on December 18 in Lviv they proclaimed the rebirth of Plast. Kryskiv became the acting chair of an interim Territorial Plast Council. On 22 February 1990, the Lviv City Council approved the Constitution of the Plast Educational and Sports Association (ESA). The Constitution still had to take into account the realities of Soviet laws, and the fact that Communist and KGB operatives were still in charge. God was not mentioned, but it was nevertheless an achievement for its time.



1990

On 18–19 May 1990, an inaugural and more representative congress was held in Briukhovychi, near Lviv. Among the 108 delegates present were representatives of all active Plast groups in the country—from Lviv and Lviv oblast, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Lutsk, Rivne, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kyiv. Up to this time, individual Plast members from the diaspora had been in contact with various Plast groups in Ukraine, but at an official level the diaspora



*First Plast camp in Ukraine, near Rozhanka, Skole district, Lviv oblast, 1990. In the middle is Evhen Duvalko (Canada), at the back is Bohdan Hasiuk and below him is Bohdan Heneha. The campers were graduates of the Plast School seminar series.*

Plast leadership had been simply observing the developments. Now, at the congress in Briukhovychi, there was an official representative of diaspora Plast present—Volodymyr Bazarko of the US KPS. The congress ratified the Plast ESA and its Constitution, which had been approved in Lviv, and elected Kryskiv as president and Heneha and Zakharchyshyn as vice-presidents. Also elected was an Interim National Coordinating Rada, with representatives of all oblasts where Plast existed.

In the summer of 1990, Plast activity and official cooperation between the diaspora and Ukrainian Plast members intensified. In June–July 1990, the Canadian KPS hosted Kryskiv, along with newly enrolled members of Plast in Ukraine Orest Shot and Ihor Hryniv. They visited a variety of Plast camps, and at the *Zolota Bulava* leadership camp at *Baturyn* camp outside Montreal, KPS Canada president Orest Dzulynsky administered the Plast Oath to Shot and Hryniv. Kryskiv, who had been invited by the HPB, went on to the USA, where at the *Vovcha Tropa* camp he was sworn into Plast by Orest Hawryluk, president of HPB. These were the first sworn leaders of Ukrainian Plast in the new era.

In July 1990, a camp was held near Rozhanka village, Lviv oblast, as the final stage of the Plast School commenced in 1989. With about 50



*Public ceremony at Shevchenko Grove in Lviv, 1990. At the microphone, Plast Ukraine president Oleksander Kryskiv presides over swearing-in of 28 scout leaders graduating from Plast School. Attending are KPR Canada chair Julia Woychyshyn and presidents of KPS Canada Orest Dzulynsky, KPS USA Olha Kuzmowycz, and KPS Germany Marta Mialkowska.*

participants from Lviv, Ternopil, Rivne, and Volyn oblasts, it was the first camp in Ukraine organized according to the Plast program. The camp leaders, Heneha and Hasiuk, were assisted by diaspora scouts Evhen Duvalko (Canada), Marko Yakubovych (USA), and Taras Rebet (Germany).

In August 1990, a graduation ceremony took place in Shevchenko Grove, a plein-air museum on the outskirts of Lviv. Following a Divine Liturgy, Plast ESA president Kryskiv administered the Plast Oath to 28 graduates of the Plast School. Among those present were Plast members from several countries who happened to be in Ukraine attending a medical congress. The HPB also met at this time—a highly symbolic event, being the first meeting of Plast's supreme executive on Ukrainian soil since the 1930s.

In September, many youth signed up to the new organization, forming the basis of the first eight Plast troops in Lviv, which chose the following historical figures as patrons: «Danylo Halytsky», «Ivan Vyhovsky», «Roman Kupchynsky», «Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny», «Ivan Sirko», «Liubov Stepanivna», «Nastia Lisovska», and «Olha Basarab».

### *Morshyn congress, October 1990*

On 19–21 October 1990, a Plast congress was held in Morshyn, a resort in the Carpathians, not far from Lviv. There were 162 participants (59

with voting rights); delegates came from Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Transcarpathia, Volyn, Rivne, Kyiv, and Donetsk oblasts. As might be expected, most came from Lviv, which sent 97 delegates and guests. Among the congress participants were four members of Plast from the 1920s period and two representatives from the HPB (Ludmila Darmohraj and Petro Sodol), as well as KPS guests representing the USA (Volodymyr Bazarko), Canada (Oksana Zakydalsky), Germany, and Poland (Petro Tyma, provisional KPS). The guests also included a delegation of Lithuanian Scouts.

The congress presented a constitution based on the one that had been registered in Lviv earlier that year. But it was by now obvious to the Ukrainians and the diaspora representatives that the constitution was inadequate. Differences of opinion flared up regarding the name of the organization, the constitution, and the way forward. Hasiuk gives credit to the diaspora representatives for helping the delegates to reach an agreement. Also, it had been hoped to appoint a full-fledged KPR, but only an interim KPR was elected instead, with individuals chairing committees with specific tasks: Kryskiv (Lviv)—finances, Hasiuk (Lviv)—camping, Pasichnyk (Lviv)—junior scouts, and Pokalchuk (Lutsk)—boy and girl scouts. In addition, a constitution committee was formed and directed to produce a new constitution, to be adopted at the next congress; chaired by Hryniv (Kyiv), the committee members also included Pokalchuk from Lutsk, Shot from Lviv, and Stepan Korchynsky from Ivano-Frankivsk. Other tasks assigned at the congress: to organize a follow-up congress no later than March 1991; to confirm candidates for membership (swearing in); and to help in the organization of Plast city branches and other centers.

The deliberations aimed to establish an accurate picture of current Plast membership in Ukraine. Delegates were told that there were dozens of scout patrols in the process of formation. This indicated that interest in Plast was great. However (as with Plast elsewhere), there was a lack of trained leaders. Only three troops conducted regular Plast activities—boys' troops in Lutsk and Lviv, and a girls' troop in Lviv (scoutmasters Pokalchuk, Shot, and Kondratiuk, respectively). In Lviv, moreover, there were 23 boys' patrols and five girls' patrols that were not yet organized into troops with proper scout leadership. Officially, Plast was registered with the state only in the cities of Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk. The congress resolved to inform the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) of Ukraine that Plast had renewed its activity in Ukraine (officially as of 22 February 1990) and now existed as a separate youth organization.

There were, however, major hurdles to overcome. Only a few trained or experienced scout leaders existed. The financial and material capacity of the organization was very limited. Many local officials in cen-

tral and eastern Ukraine did not relate to Plast, and out of suspicion or unfamiliarity, some did their utmost to discredit it. Parents, too, who had been inculcated with Soviet attitudes, found Plast's emphasis on individual development and leadership to be strange, or even unacceptable. Coherence within the organization was also difficult to achieve, exacerbated by weak communication between the various Plast branches and centers. Last but certainly not least, Plast literature—especially for training scouts and scout leaders—was very scarce.

1991

On 12–13 April 1991, the first normal Plast national general meeting (KПZ) took place in Ivano-Frankivsk. In addition to delegates from all Plast groups from various oblasts, those attending included the newly elected (first non-Communist) head of the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Rada, Mykola Yakovyna, HPR chair Lubomyr Romankiw, HPB chief scoutmaster for boys Petro Sodol, Plast Canada visitor Oksana Zakydalsky, president of KPS Poland Petro Tyma, and—for the first time—a representative from the World Organization of the Scouting Movement (WOSM), Aleksandr Bondar. The congress ratified a new official name,

Plast Ukrainian Scouting Organization (*Ukrainska skautska orhanizatsiia "Plast"*), and a new constitution. Bohdan Heneha became chair of the KPR for Ukraine, and Oleh Pokalchuk became Ukraine KPS president.

The revival of Plast was completed. The process had not been without controversy. With a few exceptions, most of the new activist leaders of the time were relatively young, in their 20s and 30s. They believed that no matter what his or her ethnic origin, anyone in Ukraine who took the oath to be faithful to God and country could be a member of Plast. They also did not believe in using schools as a basis for expansion. However, there were still some older Plast members from earlier times who believed that the organization should be only for



*Inaugural congress of Plast Ukraine, 1991. Sitting from left are KPS Ukraine president Oleh Pokalchuk, Levko Zakharchyshyn, and Stepan Korchynsky; standing is HPB chief scoutmaster for boys Petro Sodol.*



*Inaugural congress in Ivano-Frankivsk, 1991. Standing at right is Bohdan Hasiuk.*

ethnic Ukrainians, and they also wanted schools to serve as a recruiting base. They formed a rival organization called “*Plastun*” Ukrainian National-Patriotic Organization, and for about ten years it competed with Plast for members. It existed until 12 April 2001, when the organization disbanded and most of its members returned to Plast. However, Lubomyr Dovbush would not give in, forming another new organization, *Plast in Schools*, in 1993, but after a legal fight with Plast it collapsed and the conflict was finally over.

From the outset of the post-Soviet Plast renaissance, Ukrainian Plast emphasized that its members should be politically and socially active. For example, on 29 April–2 May 1989 a seven-member delegation of Plast members took part in a youth conference in Tallinn, Estonia. In June of that year, about 20 Plast members climbed Mount Makivka, where they attended to the graves of 47 Sich Riflemen who died there during WWI. The next day, along with over 20,000 citizens, they participated in a religious service to consecrate these graves. This is a typical example of the kind of civic duty performed by Plast scouts that gives it a good name and wins praise and support from the rest of society.

In Kyiv, the group led by Skorobsky that initiated the first Plast activity there was at the same time politically and socially quite active. In particular, they helped with the 1989 reinternment in Kyiv of the poet Vasyl Stus and dissidents Yuri Lytvyn and Oleksa Tykhy (all of whom died in Soviet prison camps), organized the first public meeting with representatives of the Helsinki Group and Memorial Society (head of Kyiv branch

Roman Krutsyk), and participated in the Rukh People's Movement's erection of a memorial cross at Askold's Grave in Kyiv for the buried heroes of Kruty, who died in January 1918 fighting the Bolshevik army.

## **Help from the diaspora**

News of the renewal of Plast in Ukraine sparked great enthusiasm among diaspora Plast leaders and throughout the general membership. For the older *plastuny*, it was a dream come true, and many wanted to help. It was obvious to everybody what was needed: information about structure, programs, traditions, leadership training, materials and, money. Advice was also given—not always consistent, not always ideal, and not always welcome, but there is no doubt that the diaspora played a significant if not crucial role in the renewal of Plast and its early development back in the homeland.

Initially, the HPB coordinated most of the help for Plast in Ukraine. As noted above, it sent observers to the early congresses and in 1990 invited KPS president Oleksander Kryskiv to the US to take the Plast Oath. Diaspora Plast leaders Ludmila Darmohraj and Petro Sodol held two leadership courses for UPU scoutmasters.

In July 1991, a large group of adult scouts from Ukraine, including Bohdan Heneha, Bohdan Hasiuk, Nestor Datsyshyn, Yurko Dovbush, Viacheslav Oliinyk, Slavko Kozak (all from Lviv), Iryna Zuzuk (Ivano-Frankivsk), and Natalia Litkovets (Rivne) travelled to the USA to participate in Plast scout leadership training camps.

Quite early on, diaspora Plast members began organizing and sending Plast materials individually to Ukraine, especially from the USA. Still in Soviet times, Petro Ruban from Philadelphia aided in sending Plast literature—greatly in demand—to Lviv. Soon, others such as Ludmila and Petro Darmohraj, Petro Sodol, Lubomyr Romankiw, Roman Voronka, Lubomyr and Larissa Onyshkevych, Yuri Slusarchuk, and Teodosii Samotulka began sending Plast materials to Ukraine, as well as tape recorders, computers, and other technical aids.

Then, some of the individual KPS began to help on their own, especially Canada, Germany, Britain, and Australia. Occasionally, the assistance to Plast extended beyond Ukraine's borders to the Eastern diaspora. For example, Plast was a podium presenter and lobby exhibitor at the first World Forum of Ukrainians, held at the Ukraina Palace in Kyiv in August 1992. The banners, literature, buttons, and other materials provided by KPS Canada evoked great interest on the part

of Ukrainian community representatives from Russia and far-eastern regions of the FSU.

Later that year, Tanya and Orest Dzulynsky from Canada travelled to Ternopil to help with preparations for their signature leadership camp, *Zolota Bulava*, to be held the following year for scouts 14 to 16 years old. The ZB program was well established in Canada, and in 1993 the Dzulynskys, together with Ann Szyptur, Danylo Darewych, and Ksenia Maryniak conducted this leadership camp in Ternopil oblast. The camp was held almost yearly thereafter; in 1994, Walter Daschko of Plast Canada was the ZB camp director.

## Growth milestones

Throughout the 1990s, Plast was growing mainly in the western oblasts, but also small groups were appearing elsewhere, as Ukrainian Plast leaders gained experience and advanced their own way.

Plast grew at a fast pace in Lviv and Western Ukraine, but developed more slowly in Volyn and Kyiv, while farther east it was nearly invisible. In June 1993, Canadian Plast leaders Oksana Zakydalsky, Jurij



*Plast orientation seminar in Donetsk, 1993, co-organized by Plast Canada and Plast Ukraine. From Canada are Ksenia Maryniak and Oksana Zakydalsky, first row, and Jurij Darewych, last row at left.*





*Participants of the first Zolota Bulava leadership training camp in Ukraine take part in the first large one-day national gathering of Plast Ukraine, Lviv, 1993.*

Darewych, and Ksenia Maryniak, together with three *plastuny* from Galicia—Bohdan Hasiuk, Sviatoslav Surma, and Liuba Toporovych—organized a Plast leadership training workshop in Donetsk. The 24 participants were from Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, and Mariupol; it was a good opportunity to sow the seeds of future Plast development in the eastern oblasts.

The first-ever large gathering of Plast Ukraine was held in early August 1993 in Lviv, after the end of the camping season. Plast members in scout uniform (including the Canadian contingent from L-SH, SH-B, UPU, and ZB camps) paraded through the cobblestone streets, singing Plast songs; it was an uplifting occasion.

Plast Ukraine held annual congresses, and began organizing larger events like national and international jamborees. The first ten-day Plast jamboree held in post-Soviet Ukraine was in late August 1996, near the village of Nevyske in Transcarpathia, with principal members of the Plast leadership in the diaspora participating: НРВ president Yuri Sliu-sarchuk and vP Lubomyr Romankiw, head of HPR Orest Hawryluk, us KPS president Zenon Holubets, head of British KPR Yaroslav Havrykh, and KPS Canada representative Motria Onyschuk. Scout groups from European countries also sent their delegations. Much of the funding for the jamboree was obtained from the Renaissance Foundation, set up in Ukraine by George Soros' Open Society Institute with the assistance of diaspora Plast member Bohdan Hawrylyshyn.

*CUPO acceptance*

Plast in Ukraine was quickly accepted by the diaspora Plast organizations; it became a member of CUPO in 1994 at the XII conference, held in East Hanover, NJ, with 47 delegates from six countries attending. Also accepted at the same conference were Plast in Poland and Plast in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, thus increasing the total number of members to nine. It was a highly emotional event for all present, one long hoped and prayed for by many.

Equally momentous was the swearing-in of Lubomyr Romankiw as Chief Scout in 1997. He took the oath of office on 10 August at Camp Sokil, in the presence of about 600 Plast members, including representatives from all over the world. The property for the camp had been gifted to Plast in the 1920s by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, then expropriated by the Soviet state, and returned to Plast after independence. Camp Sokil has great symbolic meaning for Plast members, especially those of older generations, and this was a historic occasion.

On 13 October 1997 at the XIII CUPO, which again took place in East Hanover, NJ, Ukrainian Plast members were among those elected to the HPB: Kryskiv as second VP and Heneha as member of the HPR. Plast Ukraine was now an integral part of Ukrainian world scouting, from the rank-and-file to the supreme governing body. Also noteworthy was that for the first time, the CUPO elected a woman, Ludmila Darmohraj, as HPB president.



*Lubomyr Romankiw was sworn in as Chief Plast Scout at Camp Sokil in the Carpathian Mountains, 1997.*

## Cooperation with the diaspora

### *Training*

Cooperation between diaspora Plast and Plast in Ukraine took various forms, and it was especially active in the late 1990s. In 1995 and 1996, members of Plast Canada, with financial assistance from the Canadian



*UPN leadership training in Ukraine. Trainers from Canada, 1st row from right: Christine Zeltway, Sophia Kachor, and Tania Onyschuk; and Oles Slywinskyj is 1st from left in the last row.*



*UPU scout leadership training with Canadian Plast trainers, funded by CIDA, 1996. Attending from Plast Ukraine: (second row) Natalia Litkovets (3rd from L), Andriy Harmatiy (4th from L), Anhelyna Klishch (1st from R), and (first row) Oleksander Kryskiv, Bohdan Hasiuk, and Viacheslav Stebnytsky.*

government, were instrumental in organizing and conducting several leadership training seminars in Ukraine for new leaders of both the junior scout (trainers Tania Onyschuk, Oles Slywynskyj, Christine Zeltway, and Sophia Kachor) and boy and girl scout divisions (trainers Tanya and Orest Dzulynsky, Ann Szyptur, Walter Daschko, and Marta Chyczij).

In 1997, Plast in Canada (Tanya Dzulynsky and Volodymyr Luciw) invited a seven-member delegation of leaders of Plast Ukraine on an official visit. The Ukrainians attended the Canadian KPZ and other meetings to learn about Plast governance in Canada. However, the leaders of Canadian Plast realized that although they could provide programs and materials, the governing structures of Plast in the diaspora would not be suitable for the large organization that Plast would or should become in Ukraine. The hope was that Scouts Canada might provide a desirable prototype, and thus, Dzulynsky and Luciw organized a meeting and seminar with representatives of Scouts Canada. Ultimately, although everyone tried to help, it actually proved to be illusory to think that the Canadian scouting model could be used in Ukraine. Scouting organizations throughout the world adapt their structures to their particular circumstances, especially funding



*Leaders of Plast Ukraine meet with Scouts Canada, Toronto, 1997. In front: Oksana Zakydalsky (KPS Canada), Natalia Litkovets, Andriy Harmatiy, Marichka Artysh, and Viacheslav Stebnytsky (KPS Ukraine president). Second row: two Scouts Canada representatives, Ihor Bushchak, Natalia Solomakha, and Tanya Dzulynsky (KPS Canada president).*



*Leadership training at the Vovcha Tropa camp in New York state, USA, 1992. At the back in the middle is Yuri Sawycky, US KPS president.*

models. Plast scout leaders from Ukraine would have to invent and adapt their own appropriate structure, and this has been an ongoing challenge.

Throughout these years, both Plast Canada and Plast USA invited Plast scout leaders from Ukraine to participate in their camps to gain experience in conducting scouting camps at the troop, leadership training, and jamboree level. Plast organizations in other countries also established close ties with their colleagues in Ukraine. It must be acknowledged that the scout leaders from Ukraine both inspired and greatly assisted Plast members in the diaspora, scout leaders and scouts at all levels alike, to retain and improve their Ukrainian language.

### *Camping and jamborees*

In general, Plast members from various countries visited Ukraine and invited members from Ukraine for a variety of events. In particular, a specific effort was made to have representatives from every Plast country take part in all Plast Jamborees, wherever they were held.

In 1995, at the initiative of Plast Canada and with government funding, a joint camp called “Vuzol” (Knot) was organized near Dniprodzerzhynsk in Dnipropetrovsk oblast. Apart from Plast, other scout groups in eastern Ukraine were invited, including the well-organized Skif Scouting Association of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. Plast leaders from Canada were Oksana Zakydalsky, Danylo Darewych, Ksenia Maryniak, and Yuri Kruk.

In December 1996, the president of KPS Ukraine, Viacheslav Stebnytsky, took part in the UMPZ international jamboree in Australia, and during 1–2 March 1997 he attended the fourth KPZ of Plast Poland in Warsaw. But probably the biggest impact of close ties between the diaspora and Plast in Ukraine was felt in Germany. In 1998, the German KPS invited Ukrainian scouts to attend scout leadership training courses in Munich and to help run its camps in Hochland. This became an almost yearly event, as Ukrainian Plast members became indispensable to the success of the camps. Between 1999 and 2003, over 120 Plast scouts from all over Ukraine would camp in Bavaria; to a great extent this was thanks to the efforts of the president of the German KPS, Olya Tkachenko.

In 1998, scouts from Ukraine visited England and attended a Plast camp at the *Verkhovyna* site in Wales; in subsequent years, scouts from Ukraine would help run Plast camps there. Meanwhile, another Ukrainian scout, Andriy Harmatiy, served as director of the *Sokil* Plast camp in Australia in 1998 and 1999. In exchange, five Plast members from Australia participated in the *Lisova Shkola* advanced wilderness skills camp held in Ukraine. In February 2001 a member of the Ukrainian KPR, Bohdan Heneha, was invited to be the director of a Plast training camp in Australia.

Contacts with Plast in Poland were particularly close. In 1998, four members of Plast Ukraine went to Poland to serve as scout leaders at a boy scout camp. That same year, a training camp for boy and girl scout leaders was held in Poland for Plast members from Poland and Ukraine. In 1998, scouts from a UPN camp near Peremyshl (Przemyśl) in southern Poland went to Lviv to meet Plast members there. And in 1998, a group of Ukrainian scouts from Poland again travelled to Ukraine to participate in the *Orlykiada*, an event originally instituted in the diaspora that had become an important part of the program of the scout divisions in those countries. Older Plast scouts from Ukraine also participated in UPU scout camps in Poland, one near Giżycko and a canoe camp, and Plast members from Poland attended international training camps held in Ukraine. The president of KPS Ukraine, Andriy Harmatiy, worked closely with the president of KPS Poland Mirosława Borowa, chair of KPR Poland Petro Tyma, and Rev. Marko Skirka to raise interest in Plast among the Ukrainians living in that country.

Also in 1998, Plast members from Ukraine attended the UMPZ jamboree in Canada, and their leaders met with Plast leaders in Toronto and Edmonton. In May 2001, 60 adult scouts from USA and Canada travelled to Ukraine for the *Stezhky Kultury* camp, which had first been held there ten years earlier. In May 2001, Oleh Piasetsky, national scout-seniors rep-

representative in Ukraine, was invited by Christina Kowcz, his counterpart in the USA, to attend the 15th UPS congress in Niagara Falls, NY.

The diaspora also cooperated with Plast in Ukraine in regards to World jamborees. Plast members from Ukraine were invited as guests to the World Scout Jamboree held in the Netherlands in 1995. Plast Canada sent one of its scouts, together with display materials, to join the Ukrainian group, and he proved to be a useful interpreter. Then they were invited to the World Scouting Jamboree held from 25 December 1998 to 6 January 1999 near Santiago, Chile. For the South American event, the Ukrainian delegation consisted of 31 members of Plast (and one representative of the Sich organization). Funds for the participation of Ukrainian scouts were collected by Chief Scout Lubomyr Romankiw and the HPB. Financial aid also came from the KPS USA (especially from the New York city branch) and from Plast members in Argentina. Moreover, on their way to the jamboree the Plast members from Ukraine attended a Plast camp in Argentina. The event demonstrated the ability of Plast members from all over the world to work together.

### *New confidence*

Aware of the great benefits that contacts with Plast in the diaspora offered, at the 7th KPZ held in Pushcha Vodytsia near Kyiv in 2002, it was resolved to broaden such ties as much as possible. At the same time, it was becoming evident that Plast in Ukraine was becoming more confident of its growing importance in CUPO. Ukraine was, after all, the only country in which Plast was growing, even though some thought that the rate was too slow. Moreover, it could take advantage of a huge demographic base, which even included the Crimean Tatars. Consequently, at a meeting held 28–30 November 1997 in Briukhovychi near Lviv, KPS president Viacheslav Stebnytsky, posed the question of which aspects of Plast should be viewed as unchanging and which ones should be considered as varying from country to country. The Soviet context from which Ukrainians were trying to emerge posed problems that were quite different from those faced by Plast organizations in the West, and so they became more selective in what they wanted and would accept.

Another indication of the growing confidence of Plast in Ukraine was its efforts to spread into areas of the former Soviet empire where Ukrainians lived in significant numbers. Attempts to help Ukrainian communities to preserve their national identity by means of Ukrainian scouting in the so-called “Eastern Diaspora” in Estonia, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, and Kazakhstan became ever more frequent. In 2002, some

contacts were established with Ukrainians in Estonia, Yugoslavia, and Lithuania, and efforts were made to interest them in Plast. Along the way, there were also some setbacks, and cooperation with the Ukrainian school in Peremyshl had ceased.

In another development, the important journal *Plastovyi shliakh*, which was sent to Plast members throughout the world, moved to Ukraine, although its editor, Lubomyr Onyshkevych, lived in the USA. Meanwhile, copies of the *Yunak* journal (ed. Oksana Zakydalsky) and *Hotuis!* (ed. Tanya Dzulynsky) were circulated in Ukraine, while some copies of *Ptashenia*, edited by Sofia Nahirna in Lviv, were sent to UPN and UPU members in the diaspora. For years, an effective communication network operated in order to help bring the widely scattered Plast organizations together.

Underlining the importance the international Plast community placed on helping Plast in Ukraine to develop, the XIV CUPO was held in Ukraine. Since 1954, the worldwide Plast conferences had met in the USA or Canada, and on 9–12 November 2000, Plast held a CUPO as well as the second session of the IV Plast Congress in Kyiv, with delegates, from the western diaspora attending (Australia, Argentina, Britain, USA, Canada, and Germany). This was the first time the world body was meeting in Ukraine, and this of course had great symbolic meaning. It was hoped that the event would draw attention to Plast, all the more so since the Ukrainian Prime Minister, Viktor Yushchenko, was invited and made an honorary member of Plast.

On 29 October–2 November 2003 the XV CUPO was again held in Kyiv, again with the aim of helping Ukraine develop and integrate into the world Plast community. The conference discussed the significance of the



Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, CUPO Kyiv, 2000.



slogan “One World—One Plast” and how concepts such as “homeland” and “patriotism” can be interpreted in various countries. The members of CUPO agreed on a number of important issues: a common Internet portal would be created; support would continue to be provided for the Fund of the Chief Scout; and at the same time efforts would be made to make Plast in Ukraine financially self-sustaining (and, therefore, totally autonomous); they also resolved to support the development of the Sokil camp-museum. Yaroslava Rubel from the USA was re-elected president of the HPB, and Ukraine provided four members to this highest Plast body: Bohdan Hasiuk, Nadia Opalynska, Nadia Tsiura, and Taras Palykhata.

This marked the end of the initial period of Plast’s rebirth and growth in Ukraine. It demonstrated the willingness and ability of Plast members in the Western diaspora to work energetically and effectively in helping their sister organization to flourish in its homeland. At the same time, it showed that new Plast members in Ukraine were not only ready to learn from the experience of diaspora Plast but also ready to offer their own strong support in the conduct of Ukrainian scouting throughout the world.

<b>Ukraine</b>	1992	1995	1997	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Junior scouts	444	521	772	636	705	705	730	792
Girl & boy scouts	979	2,142	3,244	2,417	2,432	2,407	2,482	2,942
Rover-rank scouts	149	170	372	960	874	866	964	1,036
Scout-seniors	80	114	150	264	248	240	273	283
Total	652	1,947	4,538	4,280	4,479	4,218	4,449	5,053

## **Organizational problems and changes**

Plast in Ukraine differed greatly from diaspora Plast in many ways. It was based in the home country and therefore its growth potential was great, but on the other hand a large country like Ukraine posed many problems. There was a geopolitical divide within Ukraine between the west, where Plast had roots and some recognition, and the center and east, where it was practically unknown. Another problem was that recognition from the world scouting community was not forthcoming. Thirdly, although large, Ukraine was very poor (except for an ultra-rich oligarchy and their hangers-on). Consequently, there were numerous difficulties with financing a growing organization. Scout leaders often had to abandon their units and

seek work wherever they could find it. Little wonder that fulfilling Plast's ambition to expand throughout the country was far from easy.

Many of the problems arose and were confronted only after the initial period of Ukrainian Plast's growth had been completed, that is, in 1996–99. Firstly, there was the problem of organizational structure. As Plast moved eastward, the original hierarchies, inherited from the diaspora, needed to be adjusted. At the KPZ in 1999, a document called “The Mission of Plast” was compiled, and in 2001, based on an analytical report by Levko Zakharchyshyn, Plast leaders cast a critical look at their own organization. Adjustments were needed that the diaspora had not had, and did not have, to make. As a result, there emerged a more regionally based system in Plast Ukraine. This allowed the Ukrainian KPS to deal more effectively with new city branches that now appeared, because the regional governing bodies carried primary responsibility for dealing with new city branches and their Plast activity. In some cases, district as well as regional offices were created.

Then there was (again) the problem of the name. The original name “Plast Ukrainian Scouting Organization” (*Ukrainska skautska orhanizatsiia “Plast”*) was changed to “Plast National Scouting Organization of Ukraine” (*Natsionalna skautska orhanizatsiia Ukraïny “Plast”*). This not only made the organization sound more all-encompassing, but it was also in keeping with the principles of the WOSM, that is, for each country to have only one recognized scouting organization. This change reflected the real status of Plast in Ukraine as the largest, best-organized, and nationally disseminated organization.

There were also changes in the KPS itself. Henceforth, the highest Plast body in the country became the KPR, while the KPS became responsible for executive and administrative issues, in effect, functioning as a secretariat for the organization. Control over these two bodies was exercised by the National Audit Committee (*Kraïovyi reviziïnyi komitet*, or KKK). These divisions were in line with the structures of scouting organizations in other countries, and also facilitated a clearer understanding of the division of responsibilities among the Plast leadership in Ukraine. Most revolutionary—abait understandable in view of Ukraine's poor economic status, not dissimilar to the situation of the DPS when they just arrived in America—was the decision to pay salaries to certain members of the secretariat (KPS). This was actually in line with the payment of regular salaries to central, full-time workers in scouting organizations throughout the world. Although minor changes were introduced later, this organizational structure has existed in Ukraine to date.



*Longtime Plast leaders Bohdan Hawrylyshyn (crouching at center) and Lubomyr Romankiw (to his left) among many scouts from Plast Ukraine, which has benefited greatly from their devotion, influence, and assistance.*

### *Finances*

Most pressing for Plast Ukraine was the issue of finances. Indeed, the financing of an expanding youth organization was probably the most difficult problem of all that Plast faced in Ukraine. In the early years of its renewed existence, Plast depended heavily on the financial help that came from the diaspora. However, this was relatively modest, unpredictable, and insufficient for the needs of the organization. Attempts were made, especially in 1996–97, to obtain grant money from various agencies (usually foreign ones). George Soros' NGO, the International Renaissance Foundation (where diaspora Plast member Bohdan Hawrylyshyn wielded some significant influence), funded several projects, as did Canada's CBIE (funded by CIDA). For its part, the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine supported Plast's travel to the scout jamboree in Chile in 1999. But while these grants helped, they were unpredictable and not sufficient for the needs of a growing organization. Consequently, in the early years, Plast did not have a budget.

At the 6th КПЗ, the president of Ukraine's КРС, Andriy Harmatiy, acknowledged that creating a planned budget for Plast was complicated by the fact that it still faced the problem of having no stable sources of income. At the end of 1999, Plast still did not have a system of checking the inflow and outflow of funds, and financial problems constantly emerged. Most importantly, a transparent financial system was impossible, since some of the Plast funds were in cash. Establishing the Fund of the Chief Scout for Plast Ukraine solved the problem, and by the 7th КПЗ, for the first time the organization had a full and transparent financial report.

### *Development project: Chief Scout's Fund*

In September 1999, Chief Scout Lubomyr Romankiw initiated a Development Project for Plast Ukraine, calling for the following:

- the development of oblast branches throughout Ukraine;
- building up a group of trained and well qualified administrators and scout leaders;
- training adult scouts to lead high-quality camps, training camps, seminars, and assemblies at oblast and district levels;
- development and implementation of a financial system for maintaining and expanding Plast assets;
- attainment of a high level of patriotic training for youth, to be drawn on when they attained positions of responsibility in various fields.

To finance these goals became the main objective of the Fund of the Chief Scout, which was officially registered in Ukraine. The НРБ collected the acquired funds and paid them out to Plast projects that submitted applications from Ukraine. This established some order in the financial situation of Ukrainian Plast. Funds collected between 1999 and 2003 were used to support the functioning of the CIDA-funded Plast Resource Center in Lviv, and a series of other projects. Project managers were obliged to obtain at least 10% of the needed costs from other sources.

During this period, the financial support was allocated as follows: 51% went for training and development projects, 32% helped to establish Plast city branches throughout Ukraine's oblasts (in areas where there were no oblast Plast organizations, the Fund supported the work of oblast representatives from the КРС), 5% went for the purchase of office equipment, and 3% was assigned to supplies and business travel. The remaining 9% were assigned to pay the salaries of Plast personnel who helped to administer the organization. Thus, these figures were roughly similar to those

in other scouting organizations throughout the world, where paid professionals worked with volunteers in support of the scouting movement.

By December 2002, there was a noticeable improvement in Plast's financial condition. Funds flowed into three key sectors:

- Administrative: a group of administrators was trained for Plast work, people who were well-versed in dealing with community organizations, work with volunteers, financial management, preparation and administration of grant-funded projects, etc. Members of KPS and leaders of oblast centers also received training in these areas. As a result, in four years 22 new Plast branches were established, 10 were re-activated, and groundwork was laid for creating 11 more. Especially important was successful cooperation with local government bodies, particularly in the western oblasts. Modest government funds were obtained for some Plast projects.
- Personnel development: a training program for leaders of training camps was instituted, published literature for such camps was collected, and in almost every oblast a group of volunteers was assembled that conducted annual training courses for junior and boy and girl scout leaders. Between 1999 and 2002, 1,146 such individuals were trained. Some funds went to periodicals such as the journal for UPU scoutmasters, *V dorohu* (On the Road), and the journal for junior scouts, *Ptashenia*.
- Financial-economic sector: upon adopting a professionally supervised financial management plan, Plast was able to win several grants, allowing it to acquire considerable property holdings and equipment. Regular training in accounting practices was conducted in various Plast divisions and branches. City branches in six oblast capitals were given computers, modems, and printers from the Fund of the Chief Scout. Plast personnel learned how to write grant proposals not only to this Fund but to other agencies as well. This expertise helped scouts in Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Donetsk and Crimea oblasts to obtain grants.

In addition to assistance from the Fund of the Chief Scout, Plast sought other sources of financial support for the organization in Ukraine. The 7th Congress held in April 2002 supported the establishment of a "100,000 Fund," from which only the interest would be drawn and used for Plast purposes. Through the efforts of Plast Canada, financial support had come from CIDA as foreign aid through the CBIE as early as 1993. The Canadians organized seminars attended by Plast members, whose primary goal was to help in the development of civil society in Ukraine.



*Mountain climbing in Crimea.*

Also, direct assistance from the diaspora continued to be important. For example, in November 2000 the president of Plast in Germany, Olia Tkachenko, collected funds for the purchase of two minibuses and other technology, and sent them to the National Executive in Ukraine. Plast in the diaspora, specifically the worldwide НРВ, provided other forms of help. For example, aid was provided for the development of the historic camp at Sokil, which in the 1920s had been a major Plast camping base. And without a doubt, very important was the ongoing financial help from НРВ for the leadership training camps *Lisova Shkola*, *Shkola Bulavnykh*, and *Zolota Bulava*.

One benefit of the Fund of the Chief Scout was that it introduced the concept of financial discipline. The Fund streamlined various funds received from the diaspora and other private groups, and redirected them in an orderly fashion, where they were needed. A telling sign of the financial stability that was introduced into Plast in the period from 2000 to 2003 was the formulation of a proper budget.

### *Government support*

In 2000–01, the global Plast authority НРВ provided 16.8% of the budget for Plast in Ukraine, while the Ukraine-designated Fund of the Chief Scout supplied 48.9%. In 2002, moneys from НРВ and the fund constituted almost 65% of the budget. Overall, during this period about 74%

of the budget was provided by funds that came from outside Ukraine. This support was greatly valued, but it was understood that Plast in Ukraine must look for other means of financial backing. Gradually, help from the Ukrainian government increased. To a great extent, this was due to the fact that Plast became a member of the Ukrainian National Committee of Youth Organizations. Thus, while in 2000–01 the Ukrainian state provided funds constituting 6.2% of the Plast budget, and 4.2% in 2002, in 2003 this amount rose to 25.6% of the organization's budget.

Other sources of revenue to the Plast budget included charitable donations in Ukraine, comprising 2.2% of the budget in 2002 and 3.2% in 2003. Such support was directed to the development of the Sokil Camp, as well as to purchase Plast merchandise and assist with Plast publications. Membership dues constituted 1.8% of the budget, and interest on Plast funds held in banks contributed 0.7%.

At a regional level, concerted efforts were made to obtain greater financial support from local governments. The best examples were in Lviv oblast, followed by Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil, where strong support and close cooperation with local self-government allowed considerable funds to be channeled for Plast camps.

By the end of 2003, Plast in Ukraine had become actively engaged in obtaining financial support from both national and local government bodies. Indeed, at the XV CUPO it was resolved that Plast in Ukraine should make every effort to reduce reliance on assistance from abroad and become financially self-supporting. However, given the poor economic conditions that existed in Ukraine, this was a difficult goal. While government support for Plast improved, there was no facility to guarantee such support in the future. Thus, the finances of the organization remained vulnerable.

\* \* \*

In the early days, both antagonistic and supportive elements accompanied Plast's reemergence in Ukraine. The Soviet regime had precluded the existence of Plast, whose ideology and emphasis on growth and development of the individual, and on Ukrainian patriotism, were anathema. Moreover, Plast challenged the monopoly of the huge Pioneer and Komsomol organizations that focused on the development of youth. Once the USSR fell, Plast was able to flourish in western Ukraine, but in the central and especially the southern and eastern regions of the country, negative stereotypes about Plast continued to exist. Fortunately for Plast, it found strong public support in western Ukraine.

## Regional approach to structural hierarchy

The return of Plast to its original homeland in Eastern Galicia moved relatively well. But to extend the organization to the south, east, and even central parts of Ukraine was much more difficult. In these regions, few had heard about Plast, and even fewer understood its goals. To many who had been inculcated for several generations in the Soviet mindset, patriotism—especially as it was reflected in Eastern Galicia—was a totally foreign concept, as were individual discipline and volunteerism. Moreover, those with money often preferred to spoil their children rather than confront them with challenges. Thus, in its attempts to expand eastward, the Plast leadership—itself largely Western Ukrainian, of course—faced problems that their colleagues in the Western diaspora, even those with extensive Plast experience, did not know how to handle.

Efforts to establish Plast in areas beyond Western Ukraine began in earnest in 1996–97. At the v CUPO, which was held in November 1997, it was declared that expansion of Plast “in all regions of Ukraine” should be a goal of the organization. Consequently, the country was divided into 11 regions: Dnipro—Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia oblasts; West—Lviv and Transcarpathia oblasts; Carpathia—Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi oblasts; Kyiv—Kyiv oblast; Crimea; South—Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Kherson oblasts; North—Volyn, Rivne, and Zhytomyr oblasts; Northeast—Sumy and Chernihiv oblasts; Podillia—Vinnytsia, Ternopil, and Khmelnytskyi oblasts; East—Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kharkiv oblasts; and Center—Kirovohrad, Poltava, and Cherkasy oblasts.



*Plast groups in Ukraine, 2015. Previously, Plast groups in all oblasts and Crimea, but was forced to withdraw after Crimea was invaded by Russia.*



On 6–8 October 1998, the KPS held a seminar for representatives of the regions, in which Plast members from the oblasts of Kyiv, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Rivne, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Chernihiv, Luhansk, Donetsk, and Crimea also took part. The participants discussed the specific features of their regions and agreed that they should select one oblast in each region to be the “base oblast” for Plast activity. Meanwhile, the KPS agreed to provide training for scout leaders, help with obtaining funds, and encourage interregional contacts.

### *National Plast Resource Center*

Another important step was taken earlier that year, on 1 February 1998. On that day, the Canadian-funded National Plast Resource Center was established in Lviv. It was to be a source of information about various aspects of Plast activity, with centralized data as well as departments of information section, methodology, and training, editorial boards of publications, a specialized scouting division, and a library. Having contracted a significant number of employees, the Center established the following goals: (1) to create a personnel base and regional structure for the organization; (2) to provide financial and material resources to areas of Plast activity; (3) to instruct regional centers in the most effective means of attracting membership in Plast; (4) to increase the number of junior and boy and girl scout leaders qualified to lead their units; (5) to provide Plast publications to the Plast divisions; and (6) to inform surrounding communities about Plast and its goals.

The Resource Center was created with considerable help from beyond Ukraine. The Canadian government, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), provided financial support; its willingness to help was largely thanks to the efforts of Tanya Dzulynsky of the Canadian KPS. Other supporting institutions were the Renaissance Foundation, Lviv Municipal Department of Education, and individual Plast scouts from Australia, Canada, and Poland. However, on 3–4 November 1998 the Resource Center suffered a major setback. Its premises were robbed, most of the technical equipment was stolen, and much of the information that had been gathered during the year disappeared. Although work continued, this crime discouraged plans to set up similar centers in other parts of Ukraine.

A very important step in turning Plast into a national organization occurred on 26 September 1998, when the main office of KPS was moved to Kyiv (2a Bankova Str.). It was clear that the KPS in Ukraine



*Tatar junior scouts in Plast, Crimea.*

would have to work very hard in the east to make any progress. Consequently, in November 1998 the president of KPS, Andriy Harmatiy, and two other KPS members, Vasyl Shchekun and Rostyslav Dobosh, visited numerous parts of central and eastern Ukraine and Crimea; they wished to meet existing Plast members and develop closer relations with local and central government officials. This tour demonstrated that Plast was serious about becoming a national organization, and greatly encouraged Plast members in eastern Ukraine to redouble their efforts. Nonetheless, expanding eastward was a difficult process, one that required trained and committed individuals, who were in short supply. Complicating the process was the fact that since 1990, numerous self-titled scouting organizations had sprung up. Many had only minimal scouting elements but were supported by local authorities, and most were Russian-speaking (like the majority of the local population). Another difficulty was that the wosm office (managed by a person unfavourably inclined to Plast) was based in Crimea, an area dominated by Russian-speaking scouting organizations.

### *Communications and new structural refinements*

Much attention was paid to distributing the *Informatsiinyi visnyk kps* (Information Bulletin of the KPS) in the east. Some branches, including, for example, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv, also published their own local bulletins. With the aid of the Fund of the Chief Scout, the president of KPS Ukraine introduced a project that would bring professional administrative experts to help deal with organizational problems in Plast. All this reflected the continued growth of Plast in Ukraine, which was clearly demonstrated and reinforced by the fact that the three CUPO in 2000–06 were held in Kyiv.



*Serhii Letenko with his junior scout group in Donetsk oblast.*

Regional development continued to be an important issue for Plast. In January 1999, 30 adult Plast members from 18 oblasts met in Kyiv to plan the expansion of the organization to all parts of Ukraine. In this endeavor, certain regions were clearly more active than others; those in Western Ukraine continued to be the most effective and dynamic. The Carpathian region, led by Andriy Chemerynsky, was the most active, followed by Lviv, Ternopil, and Rivne oblasts. In 1999–2000 efforts were made to organize and activate the eastern regions, particularly the one based in Donetsk (led by Serhii Letenko).

On 8–10 December 1999, a workshop was held in Lviv to summarize what had been done in this area and to establish priorities for the future. Workshop participants included Yuri Tkachuk (North), Andrii Chemerynsky (Carpathians), Volodymyr Rakovsky (West), Serhii Letenko (East), Volodymyr Skorobsky (Kyiv), Kostiantyn Vasylyzhenko (Central), and Halyna Kashyrina (Crimea). Members of the KPS and the head of the KPR, Levko Zakharchyshyn, also attended. It was decided that such meetings should be held every three months. A 10-year plan for the development of Plast, proposed by the Chief Scout, was also accepted and began to function in the fall of 1999. Indeed, the division of Ukraine into regions had allowed Plast leaders to monitor more effectively the conditions in which their organization developed.

<i>Plast Ukraine membership by oblast</i>		2010		2011		2012		2015
		Branches/ members		Branches/ members		Branches/ members		Mem- bers
01	Crimea	1	27	1	47	2	34	0
02	Vinnysia	2	56	2	76	2	90	158
03	Volyn	3	120	3	132	2	132	136
04	Dnipropetrovsk	3	73	3	69	3	93	78
05	Donetsk	7	135	8	138	8	149	85
06	Zhytomyr	1	11	1	18	1	34	34
07	Transcarpathia	3	81	3	78	2	58	63
08	Zaporizhia	0	0	1	14	1	7	9
09	Ivano-Frankivsk	17	769	17	896*	13	732	1,043
10	Kyiv	2	75	2	92	4	57	89
11	Kirovohrad	2	18	2	21	2	10	12
12	Luhansk	4	54	4	62	4	45	34
13	Lviv	24	1,687	24	1,777	19	1,982	2,317
14	Mykolaiv	n.d.	0	n.d.	0	1	3	12
15	Odesa	5	67	5	62	5	61	106
16	Poltava	3	46	3	39	3	78	192
17	Rivne	6	237	6	233	5	163	173
18	Sumy	n.d.	0	n.d.	0	1	6	10
19	Ternopil	8	455	9	633	9	562	510
20	Kharkiv	2	33	2	34	2	36	54
21	Kherson	1	12	1	13	1	13	23
22	Khmelnysky	3	47	3	41	3	68	56
23	Cherkasy	1	22	2	35	6	73	117
24	Chernivtsi	1	71	1	90	1	97	100
25	Chernihiv	2	16	3	57	3	50	67
26	Kyiv (city)	1	314	1	371	1	439	577
27	Sevastopol (city)	1	23	1	23	1	20	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>103</b>	<b>4,451</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>5,053*</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>5,093</b>	<b>6,055</b>

They also resulted in introducing new methods of managing a growing organization. This was evident from seminar topics such as “Result-based Management,” “Plast Activity and Community Development,” “Legal Aspects of Community Development,” and “Seeking Funding.” At the same time, efforts were made to invigorate Plast activity in places where it had declined after the original growth spurt, such as Vinnytsia, Zalishchyky, Kolomyia, Zhytomyr, and Lutsk. In Crimea, efforts were made to attract the Tatar community to Plast, and to include them in events such as the international Plast jamboree in 2002.

These efforts bore results. In 2000–02, seven new oblast-level Plast organizations were registered, with three underway and others just being organized. Moreover, 16 new city branches were also registered. A major breakthrough was the establishment of Plast in Bukovyna (Chernivtsi) and Transcarpathia.

By 2003 Plast had expanded significantly, covering 21 of the 24 oblasts and the Crimean Autonomous Republic. In oblasts such as Transcarpathia, Kirovohrad, Rivne, and Volyn, as well as Crimea, Plast activity had increased; however, there was a negligible presence in Mykolaiv, Sumy, and Kherson oblasts. Notably, the Lviv area had 24 Plast branches and about 1/3 of Plast’s total membership, while Ivano-Frankivsk had 18 branches. Also, thanks to the remarkable efforts of the Pavliv family (originally from Western Ukraine), Plast made considerable progress in Donetsk, where six local branches were registered. This was a good example of Plast development due to the initiative, leadership, and effort of dedicated individuals—a witness to the philosophy of the organization, which encourages leadership and community responsibility.

Plast’s journals—*Hotuis!* for the junior scouts and *Yunak* for the boy and girl scouts, published in Canada—circulated well in Ukraine, although the number of copies were limited and they did not adequately reflect the realities of the Ukrainian scouts. On the other hand, the journal *Plastovyi shliakh*, published in Lviv, was an important cohesive element for older Plast members.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Plast in the diaspora had a website in each of the countries where it existed. An important innovation then became the establishment in 2003 of a Plast Portal in Ukraine. This quickly became the main source of Plast information in Ukraine, and even beyond its borders. In another instance, plans to develop Sokil led to the creation of a website dedicated to the historic camping site. In short, computer technology greatly helped the widely scattered Plast units to develop and maintain a sense of unity.

## City branches

The city branches (*stanytsi*) remain the basic unit of Plast organization. It is where much of the Plast activity during the year occurs, and where the local leaders worked, and where a sense of belonging to Plast is most fundamentally felt. In November 1995, Plast in Ukraine consisted of 51 branches and groups: 14 of them were city branches, 23 were Plast groups or units, with six in process of formation and eight expressing an interest in Plast. Of these, 45 were located in western Ukraine and six in other parts of the land. Total Plast membership in 1995 was about 3,000.

About eight years later, there were more signs of organizational growth. At that time, there were over 100 city branches and groups. Of these, 24 were in Lviv oblast, 18 in Ivano-Frankivsk, seven in Rivne, and five in Transcarpathia. Lviv continued to be the biggest city branch in Ukraine; other large branches were in Ivano-Frankivsk, Rivne, and Ternopil. In Eastern Ukraine, the Donetsk region had six city branches, Crimea had eight, and the Kyiv area had two. Other eastern oblasts had two or three branches, while there was one city branch each in Zaporizhia, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, and Chernivtsi oblasts, and none in Mykolaiv, Sumy, or Kherson. In the east especially, the city branches tended to be small, often consisting of one or two boy or girl scout patrols and the same number of junior scout dens, led by two or three committed individuals. Total Plast membership rose to about 6,000 (some sources indicate a figure of 5,300) in 2003.

Although there was definite progress in the growth of Plast, it was uneven. Socioeconomic difficulties, lack of funds, poor contact with Plast headquarters, or an absence of local leaders usually explained these declines. The numbers fluctuated; it was difficult to keep track of who signed up, who



*Plast scouts parading through Lviv, the largest city branch in Ukraine, 1993.*

had paid his or her dues, or who had left. By 2000, re-organization efforts resulted in a marked improvement. As mentioned above, Plast activity was renewed in Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Zalishchyky, Kolomyia, and Lutsk.

Some problems, however, were not resolved, especially the fact that often young people in the villages and small towns lost interest in Plast once they grew older or moved to larger urban centers. The majority of Plast branches were in small cities, although they were also the ones with the most technical and financial problems. In all of Ukraine, only one city branch—incredibly, in Donetsk—had its own building, thanks largely to the efforts of Rev. Oleksander Volovenko and to donations by local sponsors and financial contributions from adult Plast members in the USA and Canada. Local Plast leaders benefited by establishing relationships with local government bodies, which were in a position to help them obtain proper facilities.

### *Scout camping sites*

At the outset, a key problem was to find appropriate sites for holding Plast camps. During the 1990s Sokil, the old camp area used in the 1920s and 1930s, was utilized only in a limited fashion. It was not suitable for larger camps and required modernization, so other campgrounds were found: Chota Krylatykh at Lukvytsia village near Ivano-Frankivsk, Poliany in the Zhovkva area near Lviv, and Levurda at Staryi Sambir, which was granted rent-free. With the help of local relationships, Plast was able to use various other local camp sites throughout the country.

But Sokil had a large symbolic value. This was the place where the first Plast members had camped, planned, and dreamed of an independent Ukraine. Older members in the diaspora particularly, upheld by some in Ukraine, wanted Sokil developed as a historic camp, or a type of museum. Particularly vocal was Orest Hawryluk from the USA, who was HPB president in 1991; he began the process



*Glider at Chota Krylatykh camp at Lukvytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast.*



*Plast scouts themselves rebuilt the first cabin at the legendary Camp Sokil, 1995.*

and was later assigned to supervise the project. Between April 2002 and March 2003 a crisis developed, and for a time, Plast's ownership of the camp was put in question. Fortunately, the issue was resolved in Plast's favour, thanks in large part to the assistance of Petro Matiaszek, a US expatriate and member of the Ukrainian National Board of Governors (as well as of the *Lisovi Chorty* fraternity); in the end, Plast was declared the official owner of Camp Sokil, and KPS Ukraine took over its development. With the aid of Vitalii Okunevsky, the site was prepared for camps and other Plast activities. After Okunevsky resigned, Plast established a Camp Commission, led by Stefan Krasilych, to supervise both the Sokil and Chota Kryladykh camps, and asked Orest Hawryluk to continue to serve as a link between Sokil and the НРВ. The historic camp was renovated and became a meeting place for Plast groups from all over Ukraine.

A major event occurred in 2001, when the easternmost Plast city branch in Donetsk acquired a plot of land near Zelenyi Hai for use as a camping site, with the support of НРВ and US Plast members Christina Kowcz, Maria Kramarchuk, and other scout-senior members of the *Verkhovynky* and *Kniahyni* sororities.





*Chornomorets Plast Camp near Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyyi, Odesa oblast, 2010.*

## **Plast cultural and community participation**

As a matter of course, Ukrainian Plast units met on a weekly basis and followed a program similar to the standard in the diaspora. In the summer they held camps at the troop, city branch, regional, and national levels, including a variety of camp themes such as horseback riding, seafaring, archeology, and arts. But Plast in Ukraine also introduced its own events, which reinforced the motto of “God and Country,” added specific interest and variety to the weekly programs, and improved the oft-misunderstood image of Plast in the general community. Many of these events became traditional, a testimony to the continuing evolution of the organization.

### *Uniquely Ukrainian initiatives*

In December 1999, the KPS in Ukraine passed a resolution that Plast units should publically mark state holidays and historical events, including: *Svichechka*, a Christmastide event that symbolizes the global unity of Plast; the birthday of Robert Baden-Powell on 22 February; the day marking the anniversary of the original Plast Oath (1912), on 12 April; St. George’s Day on 6 May; Ukrainian Independence Day on 24 August; and a Day of Thanks on the first Sunday of September.

A good deal of attention is also paid to cultural activity. Exceptional success was achieved, for example, by the Korali Choir from the Vyshhorod city branch (Kyiv oblast). Originally it was a municipal choir, but

gradually almost all its singers belonged to Plast. In December 2003 this choir won a prize—a first for Ukraine—at the 12th International Choir Competition in Vienna. In other examples, the Kirovohrad Plast troop regularly participated in scout jamborees for ham radio enthusiasts. And in 2003, the Plast scouts in Kramatorsk (Donetsk) cooperated with the local library in expanding Internet access to libraries. In Kyiv, funding from the US embassy in Ukraine allowed Plast scouts to experiment with innovations in the field of electronics.

Once the regional division of Plast in Ukraine was introduced in 1998, certain festivities obtained a regional character. In the East, the popular Silver Sword Tournament included many sports competitions. In March 2003, this event marked its 5th anniversary and attracted 80 scouts from five city branches in the region. Large-scale events such as this were especially important in the East because they helped expand Plast into areas where it had no roots, or where it was perceived with suspicion.

Probably the most popular Plast event was the *Orlykiada*. This was a cultural-intellectual competition, imported from the diaspora with the aid of Renata Kosciuszko (Harmatiy), in which teams of boy and girl scouts prepared exhibitions and competed for the title of *Hetmanych* and *Hetmanivna*. In November 2002, the *Orlykiada* marked its 10th anniversary in Ukraine.

Other events that also added variety to the Plast calendar. In Rivne, the *Zorianyi Viter* song competition was open to members of all divisions in singing, performing current and classical music, staging plays, and reading poetry. In May 2002, a culturally oriented festival was organized for the junior scout division in Nadvirna (Ivano-Frankivsk), attracting 58 participants from Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts. A national jamboree for older scouts called Lysonia emphasized competitions in scouting skills; in November 2000 it also celebrated its 10th anniversary. Older scouts also took part in an all-Ukrainian competition in hiking called Paths of Heroes, whose organization required close cooperation between Plast and local authorities.

In order to promote its image in Ukraine, starting in 1999 Plast held several Plast Days events in Kyiv, with the active participation of Slava Rubel of the НРВ. They occurred during the Independence Day holidays, around 23–25 August, and allowed all those who had participated in the summer camping season to demonstrate their skills in the capital.

Such events did much to expand awareness about Plast in Ukraine. Moreover, they helped to establish useful contacts with the media. The fact that this was a major concern of the organization, which had moved its headquarters to Kyiv, was reflected in the election, at the VII CUPO in 2003, of Serhii Letenko as responsible for contacts of Plast with the media.

True to the universal scouting slogan to serve “God and Country,” Plast worked to strengthen its relations with the major churches of Ukraine. On 6 March 1999, Plast awarded the title of “Honorary Protector” to Patriarch Filaret of the Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate) and to then-Metropolitan Lubomyr (Husar) of the Greco-Catholic Church (who had been a long-time Plast member in the diaspora). While relations with the UGCC and УОС(КР) were positive, they were not far-reaching. Many camps lacked priests because a Plast chaplaincy had not been developed; this was yet another challenge the Plast leadership worked to solve.

Plast was also active in charitable endeavors. Starting in Lviv oblast, Plast participated in the program “St. Nicholas to Orphanage Children.” By the end of 2003, this program spread, through Plast, to Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Chernivtsi, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Ternopil, and other towns.

### *Plast festivals*

By the late 1990’s, Plast in Ukraine had developed a capacity to organize large events. In order to celebrate and publicize the impressive longevity of the organization, the 85th anniversary of the first Plast Oath was marked. On 12 April 1997, the Lviv branch and *plastuny* from throughout Ukraine attended church, paraded through the city, and visited the graves of scouts buried in the Lychakiv and Yaniv cemeteries. They also opened an exhibition titled “Plast 1911–39,” inducted members into the organization, and ended the day with a concert. On 8–10 August 1997, over 640 Plast members met at the camp at Sokil and renewed their vows to Plast. At this time, Metropolitan Husar blessed Camp Sokil. A high point of this event was the swearing-in of Lubomyr Romankiw as Chief Scout.

For the 90th anniversary of the founding of Plast, a series of events were carried out by Plast Ukraine. The festivities began in Lviv at St. George’s Cathedral, where Metropolitan Husar, after mass, blessed the banner of the Troop #61 of Sambir. The event took place in the very same courtyard of the Academic Gymnasium where, 90 years earlier, the first Plast Oath was taken. Thereafter about 1,000 scouts, after parading through Lviv, gathered to witness Yuri Shukhevych, son of the UPA commander Roman Shukhevych, to be made an honorary member of the *Chornomortsi* fraternity. A moving moment was the presentation of six elder scouts who had belonged to Plast in the 1920s. On 11–24 August 2002, an international Plast jamboree was held near Svirzh (Lviv oblast). It attracted about 1,200 participants, who came from all parts of Ukraine and Australia, Argentina, Britain, Spain, Canada, Germany, Poland, USA, and France. For many,

the event had great symbolic significance, as it confirmed the growth of Plast in Ukraine. To emphasize this point, on 24 August 2002, that is, Independence Day, about 1,500 scouts, arriving from Svirzh, marched to the Lychakiv cemetery to attend the reinterment of Oleksander Tysovsky, the founder of their organization, from his grave in Vienna to a special crypt in Lviv. They then marched back to Freedom Square in Lviv for the final event of the international Plast jamboree. In the concluding remarks, the KPS of Ukraine thanked the НРВ for its financial support, and in turn, the НРВ publically acknowledged the great support that its collection of necessary funds had encountered in the USA, especially from the Plast Foundation of New York—and particularly a “royal gift” that was received from the *Samopomich* Credit Union in New York, thanks to the efforts of Bohdan Mykhailiv and Bohdan Kekish. The jamboree demonstrated the continuing close ties between the Ukrainian and diaspora Plast.

The jamboree also encouraged Ukrainian Plast to redouble its efforts and to expand wherever Ukrainians lived in significant numbers. In the summer of 2003, Taras Hryvul and Oksana Molchanovych traveled to Estonia to lead a Plast camp there and to support the organization of Plast in that country. In August 2003, Ukrainians from Belarus and from



*Ukrainian scout delegation, including Plast members, at the xxii Scout Jamboree in Sweden, 2011.*

Moscow participated in Plast camps in Ukraine. In consequence—and again testifying to the continuing evolution of Plast—the Ukrainian KPS president declared, “We must pay great attention to the Eastern Diaspora, where several million Ukrainians currently live. I am convinced that for the children and youth of the Eastern Diaspora, Plast can uniquely help them to identify with their Ukrainian heritage.”

## **Contacts with international scouting**

Unquestionably, Plast in Ukraine was most interested in developing ties with scouts in other countries and in becoming a member of the WOSM. In the 1920s–30s, Plast was not recognized by the international scouting community because, being based in the Polish state, it could not enter the world organization of scouts as a Ukrainian organization. In the diaspora in the postwar years there was a similar problem: world scouting did not recognize diaspora (i.e., stateless) organizations. But Plast in post-Soviet Ukraine was very different; it was a Ukrainian scouting organization that existed in an independent Ukrainian state—a state, moreover, that was not against its entry into the international body. Nonetheless, Plast’s attempts to gain recognition by the WOSM, the highest world scouting organization, were complicated, arduous, and, years later, still only partly successful.

Actually, there were two aspects to Plast’s efforts to develop international ties. One included contacts with the scouts of neighbouring countries, and the other was the relationship with the WOSM. While contacts with the scouts of neighbouring countries developed well, there were numerous problems and complications in dealing with the world scouting organization.

### *WOSM and Ukraine complications*

Plast’s contacts with the World Organization of Scouting Movements (WOSM) were established in 1991. However, the WSB was promoting the formation of various scouting organizations in the FSU, so that at least a half-dozen existed throughout Ukraine at this time (though none of them were as well organized or as large as Plast). Some of these scouting organizations did not want closer ties to Plast, considering it to be too “nationalistic,” too “militaristic,” and ethnically too exclusive—a perception fed by those who resented Ukraine’s very existence. For the most part, such organizations were Russian-speaking; notable exceptions included the independent Skif scouts in Dnipropetrovsk

and Sich, a group founded somewhat later in the east. Thus, wsb actually created a problem for itself, as their mandate allowed them to deal with only a single representative of any country's scouts, and while Plast was the largest and strongest-standing organization in Ukraine, there were other factors at play.

For one thing, the World Scouting Bureau appointed a Russian, Aleksandr Bondar (a political scientist based in Moscow), as its representative for the entire FSU. Plast members observed that his sympathies were with Russian-speaking organizations, and in particular the descendants of the Soviet-era youth organizations. In dealing with Bondar, it did not take long for Plast representatives to realize that they were not welcome in the wosm because they were considered, unfairly, an ethnic rather than a national or state-based organization. This impression was strengthened when Bondar first proposed that all the scouting organizations in Ukraine form a federation. The effort failed. At this time, the wsb moved Bondar's office to Hurzuf, near Yalta in Crimea.

Plast's relations with the wsb reached a critical point in 1998–99. Without informing any of the other Ukrainian scouting organizations ahead of time, the wsb instructed Bondar to call a meeting at Hurzuf comprising of Plast, Sich (headed by Borys Skrebtsov), and СПОК (Union of Pioneer Organizations in Kyiv, who claimed 3,750 members in 18 oblasts of Ukraine), ostensibly to form an umbrella group representing all Ukrainian scouts, which could then presume to be the official wosm member.<sup>6</sup> This elicited protests by Plast and led to the removal of Skrebtsov (as head of the umbrella group), as well as the appointment of Bohdan Hasiuk from Plast to represent Ukraine's scouts in wosm negotiations.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, *Plastovyi shliakh* published a series of articles ruminating whether the wosm was at all ready to accept Plast into its ranks.<sup>5</sup> In one article, Orest Hawryluk as chair of the HPR noted that Plast had fulfilled all the requirements of membership, but that once it did, the World Scouting Bureau imposed new ones.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Jacques Moreillon of the wsb wrote that Plast's goals were “not those of scouting” and criticized the organization because the word “scouting” did not appear in its name.

As noted above, Plast reacted to these aspersions in 1999 by changing its name to “Plast National Scouting Organization of Ukraine.” Moreover, along with the Pioneers it agreed to form an organization called “Scouts of Ukraine” (bypassing a similarly named but not officially registered federation that Bondar had formed). Bohdan Hawrylyshyn,

a Plast member from the diaspora working in Ukraine, was elected as the chair of this new body. Six other Ukrainian scout organizations then joined, and it was expected that soon it would be accepted as a member of the wosm. However, the wsb, based on a report by John Beresdorf, the chair of the wosm's World Scout Constitution Committee, denied that Plast was an "open" organization (and also stated that Sich was faith-based). As a result, the Ukrainian application was rejected.

Some members of Plast's leadership in Ukraine complained that there was false propaganda and an "information blockade" about Plast in the wosm. Plast was open to all, and only a minority had originally wanted otherwise. Also it seems no one checked to what extent any other of the so-called scouting organizations actually did adhere to scouting principles. This setback notwithstanding, there was a ray of hope from another quarter. In 2003 Bohdan Hawrylyshyn, a longtime member of Plast, was elected to the prestigious Baden-Powell Fellowship. The acceptance of Hawrylyshyn into the Fellowship raised the profile of Plast, and it was hoped would boost its efforts to gain entry into the wosm.

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Despite the problems and complications it encountered with world scouting—or, perhaps, because of them—Plast Ukraine maintained contacts with various scouting organizations in various ways. In 1991, the French scouts had been assigned to work with Plast in its efforts to gain entry into the wosm. Also Ukrainian scouts, including Plast members, were allowed to attend international Scout Jamborees as guests. In 1991, two Plast members, Ihor Hryniv and Ihor Bushchak, attended the jamboree of Asian scouts in Korea, and Plast members also participated in the Catholic scouts' jamboree in Germany. In 1995, Ukrainian scouts attended the World Scouts Jamboree in Holland.

By 1996, as Plast became better organized, its ties with other scouting organizations grew. These were enhanced by the first Ukrainian Jamboree held in Novytsia (Transcarpathia oblast) that was attended by scouts from Sweden, Denmark, France, Moldova, Hungary, and Slovakia.

In 1997 a delegation of Ukrainian Plast members met with Scouts Canada and made plans for cooperation. In 1997, Andriy Harmatiy attended a meeting of Polish scouts (*harcerze*) near Warsaw. Displaying interest in the experience of their Polish colleagues, Plast members developed contacts with them further (see below). In 1998, Plast sent a 46-member delegation to a scout jamboree in Slovakia (Žarnovica). And in 1999, a Ukrainian delegation of 31 Plast members



*Ukrainian group at Scouting Jamboree in Holland, 1995.*

and one member from Sich took part in the World Scouting Jamboree, which attracted 31,000 scouts from 157 countries to Chile. In 1999, Plast members from Svitlovodsk (Kirovohrad oblast) and Kislovodsk (Russia) communicated with scouts from England, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and Denmark in an online communication project that united over 500 scouts.

### *Friendship with Poland and other neighbors*

In the final days of 1999, Plast members received the Bethlehem Flame for the first time; Polish *harczerze* brought it to Lviv, and the *plastuny* transported it from St. George's Cathedral to St. Volodymyr's Cathedral in Kyiv. Besides the message of the Holy Light itself, this event also reflected the closer ties that were being forged with the Polish scouts. In 2000 Plast, together with about 1,000 other foreign guests, joined over 9,000 Polish scouts in the World Jamboree of Polish Scouts in Gniezno, near Poznań. Also in 2000 and 2001, a Plast group of 15 joined Polish scouts in sailing down the Czarna Hańcza River. Meanwhile, 200 Polish scouts joined Ukrainians camping in Crimea. Interestingly, this camp was sponsored by the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, and the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense. In 2001, German scouts joined Polish and Ukrainian scouts camping in Poland, near Iwonicz-Zdrój. Ukrainian scouts also camped with their Belarusian colleagues in Belarus.





*Ukrainian plastuny with Polish harcerze at the World Jamboree of Polish Scouts in Gniezno, 2000.*

A significant event for Plast and Polish relations occurred on 24 August 2002. On the last day of the Plast Jamboree, there was the reinterment of Oleksander Tysovsky, the founder of Plast. Despite the bad blood that had existed between the two nations from pre-wwii times, Polish scouts participated. Wiesław Tyżański, the leader of the Polish scouts, stated that Plast and the *harcerze* had achieved much good, and that more of the same could be expected in the future.

In July 2003, a four-part camp took place in Poland, near Poznań; its 300 participants came from Poland, Ukraine, Germany, and Belgium. And on 21–30 August a group of German scouts came to Kyiv and to the Carpathians to hike with their Ukrainian colleagues. That same year, a Plast delegation traveled to Austria to take part in the European Scouting Jamboree, which attracted 3,000 participants from 30 countries.

### *WOSM and NOSU*

Thus, despite difficulties with the wsb, Plast continued to develop satisfying and productive ties with scouts in various countries, particularly neighboring ones. Even so, the difficulties in Plast's relationship with

the wsb remained. They began to complicate its relations with scouts in other countries, as scouts allied with the wosm were not allowed to participate in the events of scouts not allied with wosm.

For the wosm, the problem of what to do with Ukrainian scouts remained unresolved. In 2004, SPOK applied for admission to the world scouting body, but their bid failed after intense lobbying by Plast and intervention of President Viktor Yushchenko, an honorary member of Plast. It was evident that some sort of compromise had to be found, since all Ukrainian scouting organizations, including Plast, wanted to become members of the world's highest scouting body.

After lengthy consultations, it was proposed that a National Organization of Scouts in Ukraine (NOSU) be formed. On 27 March 2007, an inaugural congress was held in Kyiv. It was agreed that the new organization would be composed of, initially, adult members of Plast, the Pioneers, and Sich who were qualified to join; it was decided later that young scouts could also be members. Elected to the executive were Levko Zakharchyshyn, a Plast member as chair, Valerii Tantsiura as vice chair, and Andrii Chesnokov as international commissioner. A constitution for the new organization was written, an office was found, and a paid worker was hired. On November 2007, it was registered at the Ministry of Justice. As of December 2007, the NOSU had—at least notionally—2,475 members: 718 females, 1,546 males, and 200 scout leaders. In 2011 the number would be 4,650.<sup>9</sup>

Being non-ethnic, non-faith-based, and national in coverage, the NOSU fulfilled the requirements of the wosm. In mid-March 2008, General Luc Panissod, acting secretary of the wosm, visited the NOSU in Kyiv, conducted lengthy interviews, and declared his satisfaction with the arrangement. In 2008 the NOSU applied to become a member of wosm, and at its meeting on 28 Feb–2 March 2008, the World Scout Committee recommended its acceptance. Consequently, on 1 July 2008, the NOSU became a full member of the highest scouting body in the world.

It was a compromise that was accepted by all, but did not fully satisfy anybody. The Ukrainian scouting organizations whose members could belong to NOSU did not need to institute any changes in their traditional order. Those among their members who so wished, could join NOSU and could participate in world scouting affairs, while those who did not wish to join did not need to. Some accepted this arrangement as necessary,<sup>8</sup> but others in Plast, both in Ukraine and the diaspora, were incensed. According to them, it was Plast alone which had the right to be in the wosm—Plast was the original scouting organization in 1911, Plast

had a long history, Plast was the most organized and largest youth organization in Ukraine, and Plast alone really cared about Ukraine, while the others were pro-Russian, not patriotic. The move was seen as being anti-Ukrainian catering to Russia, which wanted Ukraine in its sphere of influence and did not want to see a patriotic Ukrainian youth organization represented in WOSM. To add insult to injury, NOSU was assigned to the Eurasian group of scouting organizations within WOSM, whereas Plast members in particular wanted to be part of Europe. Those who reluctantly cooperated with NOSU hoped that activity in Plast would be accepted as activity in NOSU, but it was not happening. Others tried to re-make the organization in their image. For Plast, the struggle was still on.

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## **Summary**

The revival of Plast in an independent Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR inaugurated yet another unique chapter in the long history of the Ukrainian scouting organization. While Ukraine still retained some of its characteristics from before WWII, many new features had appeared during the postwar Soviet years. Most significantly, Western Ukraine had been united with the rest of Ukraine; this meant that upon its return, Plast would have to be transformed from a regional Western Ukrainian organization into a much more broadly based national one.

In the early years of the revival, Plast in Ukraine had depended greatly on models and assistance from the diaspora. After the first decade, by the start of the 21st century, it became clear that major changes in the organization were needed. By the turn of the millennium, Plast introduced a series of changes that reflected its adjustment to the situation it faced in Ukraine. It introduced a different way of organizing its leadership and implemented an expansion to the east, beyond the traditional base in Western Ukraine. Plast also expanded its program by adding a variety of camps. Plans were also made to expand the Plast publishing program, in order to reach the parents of its members and the communities in which Plast existed. As the organization grew, it attracted more public support and developed closer ties with the state government, particularly local governments. Plast was becoming the largest and most important of the youth organizations that appeared in Ukraine after 1990. This in spite of the fact that it faced daunting challenges, especially the socioeconomic situation in Ukraine, which impacted negatively on membership.

As Plast in Ukraine matured, it became increasingly evident that Plast members from Ukraine could help those in the diaspora to face the threat of assimilation and, in particular, to retain the Ukrainian language. Ukrainian scout leaders were invited to various countries to participate in Plast camps. In time, some Plast members also emigrated from Ukraine and provided new blood in numerous communities of the Plast diaspora.

Before WWII, Plast had little to do with the WOSM, because Western Ukraine was under Polish rule. But once it became the main scouting organization of an independent Ukraine, it was assumed that Plast would have the opportunity to determine its relationship with the WOSM, something that Plast in the diaspora could never develop. Despite numerous difficulties, Plast was seriously committed to its goal of being the primary representative of scouting in Ukraine on the world stage. It developed relations with various scouting organizations, mainly in Europe, and it met all of the WOSM requirements; it cooperated with other scouting organizations in Ukraine but had to compromise to become a part of the NOSU—an organization accepted by WOSM but not on the terms Plast wanted.

Over all, compared to other scouting organizations, Plast became the best-organized and most active youth organization in Ukraine. Moreover, it contributed to international Plast; it played a role in the development of an emerging democratic Ukraine; and it spearheaded a reset in relations with international scouting. But Plast did not become a full-fledged scouting organization in WOSM in its own right, as it wanted. For 100 years Plast had a unique story, always struggling, and in some aspects the struggle is continuing, in a country that itself is struggling to become truly independent, truly democratic, and prosperous.

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#### Notes:

1. Havryliuk [Hawryluk], Orest. 'Vidpovid,' *Plastovyi shliakh*, 1998, no. 4, p. 16
2. Hasiuk, Bohdan. '20-littia vidrozhennia Plastu v Ukraïni,' part 1, *Plastovyi shliakh*, 2009, no. 1, p. 16
3. Hasiuk, Bohdan. '20-littia vidrozhennia Plastu v Ukraïni,' part 2, *Plastovyi shliakh*, 2009, no. 2, p. 19
4. [www.100krokiv.info](http://www.100krokiv.info) provides information on the renewal of Plast in Ukraine in 1989–91

5. Hasiuk, Bohdan. “Separatni” perehovory,’ *Plastovyi shliakh*, 1998, no. 4, p. 18
6. Mokhnatyi, Mykhailo. ‘Ukrains'kyi Plast i Svitove skauts'ke b'iuro,’ *Plastovyi shliakh*, 1998, no. 4, p. 14
7. Harmatii, Andrii [Harmatiy, Andriy]. ‘Skauty Ukraïny: Khto vony?’ *Plastovyi shliakh*, 1998, no. 4, p. 17
8. Kyiak, Natalia. ‘Stolittia skautynhu,’ *Plastovyi shliakh*, 2007, no. 4, p. 21
9. Wikipedia, ‘National Organization of Scouts of Ukraine’

## Afterword\*\*

As the world learned after the Maidan Revolution of 2013–14, since 1990 Ukraine had been governed by an oligarchic kleptocracy, which at times payed lip-service to becoming a European-oriented country but mostly toed a pro-Russian line. An idealistic, patriotic organization like Plast had to struggle, facing many challenges just to exist and thrive.

Plast celebrated its centenary in 2012. Coordinated by Orest Dzulynsky for the HPB, festivities took place all over the world, including special programs, camps, songs, films, and publications. In particular, an 890-page album was published, *Almanakh 100-littia Plastu* (ed. Yaroslava Parakhoniak-Rubel). A banner was made with the flags of all the countries where Plast exists, and it travelled from country to country, finally arriving in Lviv, where it was ceremoniously presented at the Plast 2012 Jamboree.

In Ukraine the celebrations were two-pronged. On the one hand, the government and all scouting organizations marked 100 years of scouting with little mention of Plast (despite the fact that only Plast traced its history back to 1912). At the same time, Plast itself celebrated 100 years of its existence with a variety of programs, culminating with a very successful, well-publicized two-week jamboree that hosted 1,825 participants, including 424 from the diaspora. Plast Ukraine’s maturity as an organization was shown in the preparations and operational logistics, with, moreover, local sponsorships amassed worth thousands of dollars, so that no subsidy was necessary from the diaspora. But no official representatives from WOSM attended, nor did scouts from any country associated with the WOSM. Plast members were disappointed. Plast always wanted to be on the world stage, and the arrangement with

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\*\* Written by Tanya Dzulynsky.

NOSU did not satisfy anybody. For some, the price was still too high to participate because of the compromises involved, while others wanted to ensure at least some connection with international scouting. What the future would bring no one knew, but all, in their own way, were ready to struggle to achieve their goal.

After the Orange Revolution, the government of Viktor Yanukovich was more autocratic, more corrupt, and more pro-Russian than any government since 1990. Adult Plast members were in the forefront of the pro-European movement. During and after the Maidan Revolution, they were active participants in the events, thus proving Plast's contribution to the development of positive citizens. But the same time, with the country experiencing economic difficulties, and with devoted *plastuny* heeding the call to defend democracy and human rights—including volunteering to fight the war, and some paying the ultimate price, it became ever more difficult to find leaders to run the organization.

As has happened so many times in its history, Plast in Ukraine has to struggle in the new, albeit in many ways positive, environment. But in the minds of those who have lived through the ups and downs of the Plast experience, there is no doubt that the organization will rise to meet and overcome all its challenges.



### Plast International Jamborees (УМРЗ)

- 1947 Germany, Mittenwald  
*Note: It was called a Spring Fest (Sviato Vesny), but it was in fact the first Plast jamboree, all the more remarkable since it was organized by refugees in the DP camps a mere two years after the war.*
- 1957 Canada, *Plastova Sich*  
1962 USA, *Vovcha Troja*  
1967 Canada, *Baturyn*  
1971 USA, *Vovcha Troja*  
1978 Canada, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, Alberta  
1981 Australia, *Sokil*  
1982 USA, *Vovcha Troja*  
1983 Germany, Hochland  
1986 Australia, *Beskyd*  
1987 Canada, *Plastova Sich*  
1992 USA, *Vovcha Troja*  
1998 Canada, Ukrainian Park Campground, Manitoba  
2002 Ukraine, Svirzh  
2007 Canada, *Plastova Sich*  
2012 Ukraine, Lviv  
2017 Germany, Hochland and Mittenwald









*Official opening in Lviv of the International Plast Jamboree, 2012, commemorating 100 years of Plast.*

# Chapter 20

## Conference of Ukrainian Plast Organizations (CUPO)

*Tanya Dzulynsky*

The history of Plast as presented in this book covers the history of the Plast organizations in the different countries where it has operated, but does not adequately cover the history of the Conference of Ukrainian Plast Organizations (CUPO), which was formed in 1954. Here it is necessary to note that prior to 1954, there always was one overall international Plast leadership in some country, accepted as primary by others. From 1912 to 1943 this leadership was on Ukrainian land, in Polish-occupied Galicia. During WWII, these leaders emigrated and regrouped in 1945 in Germany in the DP camps; there, they called the newly formed organization by the name used conventionally by Ukrainian scouts living abroad, SUPE. Its executive, the SUPE Command, was later restructured to have two components: an elected Supreme Plast Council (*Holovna Plastova Rada*, or HPR) and the Supreme Plast Executive (*Holovna Plastova Starshyna*, or HPS) appointed by the HPR. The central leadership made decisions regarding structure, programming, symbols, publishing, jamborees, and



*Plast Jamboree in Ukraine, 2002. National flags are displayed of the countries where Plast organizations exist.*



*CUPO Conference in Toronto, 1970.*

communications with the WOSM and all appropriate political bodies. As the postwar emigration began in the late 1940s, the HPS appointed individual leader-designates to set up and develop Plast organizations in various other countries, but the HPR remained in Germany.

By 1954, Plast organizations were well established in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Britain, and Germany as well as the USA. It became evident that an umbrella organization was necessary to coordinate their activities and make more inclusive decisions. At a meeting in Niagara Falls, ON, in 1954, SUPE was dissolved and CUPO was formed. In time, a constitution was approved specifying the aims, responsibilities, and governance of the new Plast body. In general, there would be triennial conferences to adopt significant decisions, and the HPR and HPB (*Holovna Plastova Bulava*, Supreme Plast Board) to govern in-between the conferences. In addition to the HPB members themselves, the board would establish subcommittees on a permanent or ad hoc basis to manage areas such as scout leadership training, publishing, program development, jamborees, and awards. These subcommittees would draw their membership from various countries.

In the beginning, some programs were not only created but also administered at this level, but in time they were handed over to be administered by the country executives (KPS), which modified the programs as needed to suit the needs of their constituencies. This applied particularly to scout leadership training courses and camps.

For any significant changes to come into effect, they had to be adopted at the triennial CUPO conference by an absolute majority (2/3), and be ratified by the AGM of 2/3 of the Plast member countries, also by an absolute majority. Thus, a bias against change was built in to the CUPO.

In 1954 and for some time thereafter, the leadership was located in the United States, with most members of the executive from that country. In time, the location and majority membership was rotated alternately between the USA (New York) and Canada (Toronto), with constant representation from both countries. After new Plast organizations Ukraine, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (later Slovakia) were accepted in 1994 and with the advent of affordable electronic communications, the composition of the executive has varied; nevertheless, over the years US members of Plast have dominated on the worldwide executive (HPR and HPB).



*Plast Ukraine was accepted into CUPO in 1994;  
Oleh Pokalchuk carries the Plast Ukraine banner.*

From its beginning, the chief objective of the CUPO was to maintain the unity of Plast, while at the same time trying to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. No doubt, it was intended to be a governing body responsible for deciding Plast ideology, structure, and programs, but the structure of the CUPO itself could also be interpreted as a coordinating body. Over time, this would lead to many discussions and differences of opinion.

Throughout the years, attempts were made to adapt to changing circumstances, in spite of the built-in bias against change. Differences of opinion came from new generations, but also from groups in different countries, which developed varying organizational cultures. In general, there were more proposals for change coming from Canadian members, while members from the United States—particularly those in leadership roles—were more conservative. The topics discussed included:

- What is the responsibility of Plast members to “Ukraine” versus their country of citizenship or birth, and how best to manifest it?
- What does the word “Ukraine”, used in the oath, mean at a time when the country does not exist independently?



*Twelfth CUPO in New Jersey, USA, 1994.*

- Assimilation and the deteriorating use of the Ukrainian language (as the language of Plast).

No one disagreed that the Plast mission should include activism for the Ukrainian cause and development of well-rounded, responsible, socially conscious individuals, but there was disagreement as to where the emphasis should lie. Also, everyone agreed that *samovykhovannia* (self-actualization) was fundamental for Plast, but there were differences

### Plast Oath

In the Constitution adopted by CUPO in 1954, it is stipulated that the three main duties of a Plast scout are:

1. to be true to God and Ukraine;
2. to help others;
3. to uphold the Plast Law and be obedient to Plast leadership.

The exact wording of the Plast Oath and Law has changed at various times in various places throughout Plast's history, though in essence the meaning has not changed. The history of the exact words, format, and agents of change concerning the oath has not been researched. However, it is safe to say that "Ukraine" was generally used even when the country was not **yet independent**. Along with that was the question of responsibility of Plast members to "Ukraine" and to their country of citizenship or birth, and how best to manifest it.

The oath reads:

*On my honor, I swear to do my best, to be true to God and Ukraine, help others, and uphold the Plast Law and be obedient to Plast leadership.*

of opinion as to its specific meaning. The one area where there was always a consensus was with respect to the Plast symbols; no one demanded any significant changes in this area, as all supported at least an outward unity.

There was always discussion as to proposed changes to Plast organizational structure, divisions, programs, and system of governance, and over time, some changes were indeed made to programs, regulations, and skills tests. But as there were differences between CUPO member countries due to varying circumstances and cultures, it happened in practice that countries such as Canada made de facto changes—especially to the leadership training programs for scouts at various levels. Ukraine also made its own changes. Of course, in practice, scout leaders at all levels in all countries have interpreted Plast programs, regulations and skills tests in their own ways. Although the official changes made by CUPO are well documented, the de facto changes have not been researched.

### *Congresses*

To facilitate the implementation of CUPO decisions, Plast holds Congresses; there have been five to date. Topics discussed are mainly those dealing with theoretical and ideological principles which are to guide Plast, and methodologies to be applied thereupon.

In many cases, principles have been reaffirmed, with specific interpretations proposed. The Congresses may compile resolutions to be voted on by the CUPO.

A significant topic discussed and resolved affirmed the idea of a “permanent diaspora”—that is, Plast would not disappear abroad even if it was reestablished in an independent Ukraine. A corollary to this entailed the obligation of active participation in countries where Plast members live. Assimilation and use of the Ukrainian language have been continually discussed, but these are problems that cannot really be solved. In point of fact, Ukrainian remains the official language of Plast (abroad) to this day, and activism for the Ukrainian cause, especially in the area of Ukrainian education, remains the responsibility of each Plast member.



*Second Congress was held in 1967.*

### **Diaspora Plast and the “Two Homelands” concept**

Struggling with the variability of external circumstances, Plast tried to preserve its basic principles and, at the same time, meet the changing needs and interests of its membership. Broader questions of its mission and new program directives were discussed at the international level at Plast Congresses. At the Second Plast Congress, which met in the years 1966–70, there were sharp debates about the future of Plast, illustrating the growing division between conservatives and reformers.

Conservative members of the Plast national organizations were against changes in the organization, rationalizing that Plast would continue to exist only if its leadership retained not only the ideas but also the principles and rules set out by the founders. They placed an emphasis on commitment, sacrifice, duty, service, and dedication to the nation.

Other leaders believed that without the introduction of new basic principles that would take into account the new circumstances in which Plast now existed, the organization was doomed to decline. They proposed a concept of “Two Homelands,” which reflected the reality of life in the diaspora. Cultural and national identity were joined, in a non-conflicting manner, with political and social responsibilities in the countries where Plast was now found. At the Second Plast Congress (1966–70), the concept of “Two Homelands” was adopted as a new interpretation of the *plastun’s* duty of loyalty to Ukraine.

With the renewal of Plast in Ukraine (see ch. 19), Plast reiterated its longstanding official position that although political activism by individual members was laudable, political party activism had no place in Plast per se. At that time, CUPO also expressed its position that Plast in Ukraine belonged in the European group of scouting organizations. During the Congresses, suggestions have been discussed as to how to put the principles into practice, but mostly the various Plast communities throughout the world are focused on their own struggles with their specific problems in their specific circumstances.

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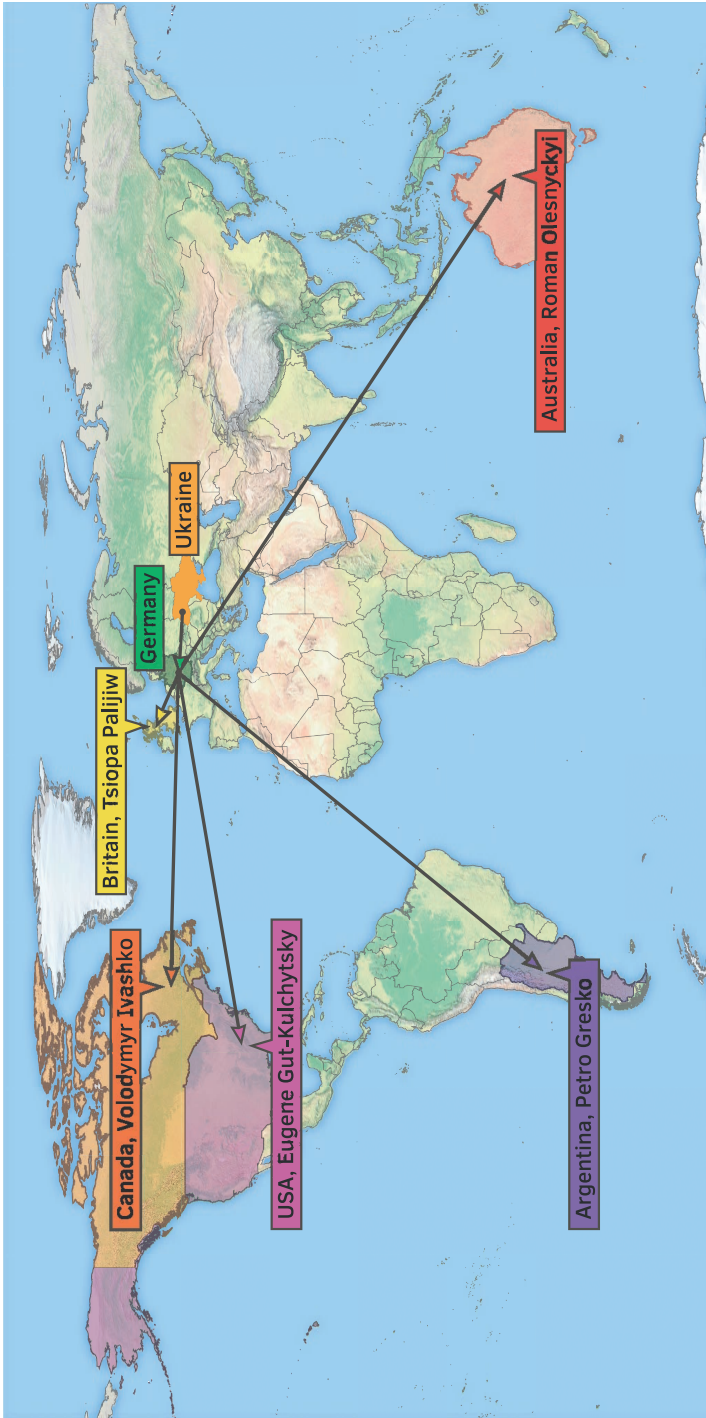
Австралія – Аргентина – Великобританія – ЗСА – Канада – Німеччина – Польща – Україна

Conferences		Congresses	
		I. 1948	Aschaffenburg, Germany
I.	1954 Niagara Falls, ON, Canada		
II.	1957 Niagara Falls, ON, Canada		
III.	1964 Soyuzivka, NY, USA		
IV.	1967 Albany, NY, USA	II. 1965–70	1966 Albany, NY, USA*
V.	1970 Toronto		1970 Toronto**
VI.	1973 Detroit		
VII.	1976 Soyuzivka, NY, USA		
VIII.	1979 Soyuzivka, NY, USA		
IX.	1982 Soyuzivka, NY, USA	III. 1984–91	1984 Soyuzivka, NY, USA
			1986 Hamilton, ON, Canada
			1987 Plastova Sich, ON, Canada
X.	1988 Toronto		1988 Toronto
XI.	1991 East Hanover, NJ, USA		1991 East Hanover, NJ, USA
XII.	1994 East Hanover, NJ, USA		
XIII.	1997 East Hanover, NJ, USA	IV. 1997–2003	1997 East Hanover, NJ, USA
XIV.	2000 Kyiv		2000 Toronto
XV.	2003 Kyiv		
XVI.	2006 Kyiv	V. 2006–13	2006 Kyiv
XVII.	2009 Toronto		2009 Toronto
XVIII.	2013 East Hanover, NJ, USA		

\* Congress Commission created

\*\* Standing Research and Planning Commission created





*Postwar dispersal of Plast throughout four continents, with names of leaders-designate.*

## Chapter 21

# Epilogue: The songs of Plast

From its start in 1912, Plast always had everything in common with its brother and sister scouting entities throughout the world, including patriotism, a theistic outlook, and focus on youth. These fundamental elements would be most welcome and encouraged in any sovereign country, but would certainly be considered undesirable threats by repressive regimes intent on subjugating captive nations.

It has been said that prior to Ukraine gaining independence as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, its enemies considered three organizations to be the Ukrainian people's strongest bulwark against assimilation and staunchest defenders of their cultural identity and national aspirations: the Ukrainian Church, NTSH/UVAN, and Plast.

One might ask, what gives Plast the fortitude to be included in this mighty cohort? No doubt its ideals and its methodology have stood the test of time, but there is an additional element that makes Plast particularly attractive—the virtually ubiquitous presence of singing, whether in assembly, at weekly meetings, on the trail, or around the campfire.

The Ukrainian ecclesiastical and folk calendars provide a multitude of occasions to be marked with carols (*koliady*, *shchedrivky*), maying and solstitial songs (*hahilky*, *kupalski pisni*), and prayers. Here it must be noted that the ritual openings and closings of Plast assemblies, both at *stanytsia* and division-level gatherings and daily in camp or in transit, are invariably accompanied by sung prayers. Most have words specially



*Girl scouts performing maying dance at the first Plast Jamboree in North America, Plastova Sich, 1957.*



*Plast girl scouts carolling in Lviv.*

written for Plast that have been set to traditional church hymn melodies. In fact, the junior scout division has its own youthful versions of the sung morning and evening prayers.\*

To these must be added literally hundreds of Ukrainian folk songs, composed popular songs, and even translated rock-'n'-roll and pop songs—from various cultures but particularly the USA—enthusiastically memorized and sung by scouts of every Plast rank and division. However, above them all reigns a stellar collection of songs composed specifically for Plast—its stirring anthems,\*\* as well as songs lauding the Plast ethos, life as a junior and older scout, and most especially the beloved songs of the various adult scout fraternities, many of which have achieved renown in the mainstream Ukrainian community, far beyond the organization itself.

**Plast without Ukrainian songs would not be Plast.**

Non-Plast members of the diaspora-born generation have been known to remark wistfully that by not sending them to Plast, their parents deprived them of the opportunity to learn countless Ukrainian

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\* *Tsariu Nebesnyi*, UPV morning prayer officially adopted 1957, traditional church hymn melody, original Plast lyrics unattrib.; *Otche Nash*, UPV evening prayer, melody and unique Modern Ukrainian words poss. by Dr. Arsen Richynsky; *Syni dzvinochky*, UPN morning prayer officially adopted 1967, traditional church hymn melody, lyrics unattrib.; *Bozhe, shcho dav nam tsiu dnynu*, UPN evening prayer officially adopted 1967, traditional church hymn melody, lyrics unattrib.

\*\* Plast Anthem *Tsvit Ukraïny i krasa*, mus. Ya. Yaroslavenko, lyr. DROT and Ivan Franko; Anthem of the Transcarpathian Scouts *Hei, plastuny*, mus. Ya. Yaroslavenko, lyr. Sp. Cherkasenko; Junior Scout Anthem *My dity ukraïnski*, mus. Ya. Barnych, lyr. Ya. Slavutych.

songs. The power of Ukrainian poetry and music should not be overlooked in estimating Plast's contribution to the preservation of Ukrainian national identity and ties to the homeland throughout the decades of its existence abroad. And still today, Plast's aim of fostering generations of patriotic, devout, and youthfully optimistic members of society continues to be fulfilled, not least through the gift of Ukrainian song.

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*Concluding campfire of KPT at Awacamenj Mino Scout Camp (Quebec), 2000, led by Mykola Bilash and Olenka Slywynska.*



*The Plast Centennial Banner was hosted by Plast members in Germany at their camp at Hochland, near Königsdorf, 2011.*

## Glossary of Plast terms (EN–UK)

assembly	<i>збірка</i>	branch-level assemblies occur at least three times per year:
boy / girl scout	<i>юнак / юначка</i>	aged 11–17
branch	<i>станиця</i>	largest structural unit of the national Plast organization in a specific location (city or region)
branch executive	<i>станична старшина</i>	administrative and executive body for the Plast branch
camp director	<i>командант</i>	works closely with the sergeant-type “duty scout” ( <i>бунчужний</i> ), kitchen manager ( <i>інтендант</i> ), counselors ( <i>виховники</i> ), and instructors to carry out the camp program
Chief Scout	<i>Начальний Пластун</i>	Ceremonial head of the worldwide Plast organization
Clandestine Plast	<i>Таємний Пласт</i>	after the ban on Plast by the Polish authorities (in Volhynia in 1929 and Galicia in 1930), Plast continued its existence as an underground organization
conference	<i>з'їзд</i>	general meeting (КРЗ) of the national organization, including the executive (КРБ) and branch presidents
den	<i>рій</i>	a unit of 5 to 10 UPN scouts of the same age
director and staff	<i>булава</i>	leadership team at a Plast camp or other function
divisions	<i>улади</i>	age-based Plast ranks: junior scouts 6–11 yrs, boy and girl scouts 11–17, rover-rank scouts 18–35, scout-seniors 35+
Eagle Scout (equiv.)	<i>гетьманська вірлиця / скоб</i>	additional (hetman's) honor rank, granted to top achievers among Level III girl / boy scouts
Eagles' Circle	<i>Орлиний круг</i>	created by Teodosii Samotulka to organize training and methodological development for the junior scout division (UPN); chairperson reports to НРБ
Forest School	<i>Лісова Школа</i>	leadership training camp for male scouts (UPU) and rover-rank scouts
fraternity	<i>курінь (чоловічий)</i>	Plast troops for male rover-rank (УР) scouts and scout-seniors (УРБ) who have banded together, focusing on particular scouting interests
Great Trek	<i>Велика Мандрівка</i>	what Plast called the journey of emigration by refugees (ДРБ) from Europe, after WWII

junior scout	<i>новак/новачка</i>	boys and girls in the youngest division of Plast (UPN), aged 6–11, grouped in dens and packs
lone scout	<i>самітник</i>	There is a special program for scouts who live too far from a Plast center to take part in group activities
Oath Day	<i>День Пластової Присяги</i>	Every year the date of April 12 is celebrated, mainly in Ukraine, as the date of the First Plast Oath taken in 1912
Orlykiada	<i>Орликіяда</i>	competition between scout patrols, named for Pylyp Orlyk, on selected cultural-historical themes
pack	<i>гніздо</i>	a unit of junior scouts made up of several dens
patrol	<i>гурток</i>	a unit of 5 to 10 UPU scouts of the same age
Plast Congress	<i>Пластовий Конгрес</i>	Meeting to set out the theoretical and ideological principles to guide Plast. First Congress held 26-29 March 1948 in Aschaffenburg
program manager	<i>бунчужний</i>	during a larger group activity (camp, assembly), a scout responsible for running the program
rover-rank scout	<i>старший/-а пластун/ка</i>	older scout aged 18–35, belonging to the USP division as well as optionally to a fraternity/sorority
Scout counselors' council	<i>Скобиний круг</i>	A policy setting unit, whose function is to create and/or modernize the scout program. Its leader is part HPB
scoutmaster	<i>зв'язковий /-ва</i>	Experienced scout leader who is responsible for a troop and coordinates its functions and activities
scout-senior	<i>пластун-сеніор</i>	Plast members over 35 years of age; the UPS division was created in 1930
Shkola Bulavnykh	<i>Школа Булавних</i>	Leadership training camp for girl scouts and rover-ranked scouts
сков	<i>СКОБ: сильно, красно, обережно, бистро</i>	Plast scout greeting - acronym for: “strongly [in mind and body], beautifully [in spirit], carefully [in notions and plans], quickly [in thought and deed]”
Skobyn kruh	<i>скобин круг</i>	The international unit of experienced scout counselors
sorority	<i>курінь (жіночий)</i>	Plast troops for female rover-rank (USP) scouts and scout-seniors (UPS) who have banded together, focusing on particular scouting interests
Spring Fest	<i>Свято Весни</i>	Branch-based outdoor function that starts the summer camping season
troop	<i>курінь</i>	A unit of scouts, consisting of several patrols

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