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YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS IN ESTONIA (1918—1940)

Youth organizations have played an important part in the general social development in Estonia. With great inner activity potential guided by older and experienced people, it resulted in continuous spiritual and physical process of growth with its diverse peculiarities. The results of teaching and educational work at schools found reflection in the youth movement. The outside school youth organizations were also controlled by the Ministry of Education, though very often the leaders of these organizations were enthusiasts without any special pedagogical training.

It was only during the years of independent Republic of Estonia that the activity of youth organizations in Estonia could be openly discussed. In the Republic of Estonia, as in any democratic state, all kinds of political, professional, hobby, and cultural organizations have been active. Most of these have also tried to establish youth branches. The young nationally-minded state was deeply interested in bringing up and developing a full-value rising generation. However, limited interest-groups could not involve masses. Therefore social youth organizations based on a broader world outlook, where young people themselves could decide the direction of their activities, had greater success.

This investigation covers the kind of youth organizations that had the same or similar programmes as international youth organizations. Estonia, having achieved her independence, started educating her youth at a time when vital, well-planned and resultant youth organizations like the Scouts, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), etc. were active in Europe. There were many of them for different ages, interests and temperaments. Being a member of an international organization with a strong centre meant getting support from it. Having international contacts was both important and interesting for young people.

So it happened that the action programmes of international organizations reached Estonia soon after it became independent and it found a quick response here. Nationalism was not a major problem, either. In main questions the opinions were shared.

The Estonian Statistics of 1933 shows the existence of 225 educational and youth societies, of these 87 in towns. Some of the societies were small and of local importance only, others became youth organizations with a considerable membership.

Scouting was assuredly the biggest movement of school-aged children and teenagers in Estonia. By the end of the 1930s, it united about 50,000 youngsters. As scouting was and still is, the biggest global organization which is active in 120 countries and unites about 13 million youngsters, it should be studied more thoroughly.

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The founder of scouting, as is commonly known, was the British general sir Robert Baden-Powell, familiar to all scouts as "Bee-Pee". Being a brilliant intuitive educator he valued the gang spirit that the educational discipline had so far seen only in connection with guttersnipes and criminal element.¹ To be more engaging, scouting deserts theorizing. There are three guiding principles on which the activities are based: practice, games, competition. In scouting, activities in the open air are regarded as particularly important: harmonious coexistence with Nature and a camp life where boys have to manage things by themselves. Thereby all necessary activities and positive habits are connected with playing games, and on every possible occasion competition is involved.

Scouting reached Estonia soon after it was initiated in England. Some data refer to it as early as 1911. The beginning of the movement in Estonia took place in Pärnu among the students of the Boys' Gymnasium. In 1912 the Estonian scout patrol was affirmed as the first scout patrol of the "Russki scout" organization in the Baltic-Sea provinces.

Since 1912, scouting was propagated in Estonia by H. Valma, who became acquainted with it while staying in Germany, through the movement of the *Pfadfinders*.² Yet, his book "Scout in England and Elsewhere" was not published here before 1919. In 1917, scout patrols were formed in Tallinn. The founder of these was Anton Õunapuu — one of the first sport trainers in Estonia with a special diploma. A. Õunapuu had been educated in Finland where he got acquainted with the principles of scouting which he brought along to Estonia. Working at a school, he formed scout patrols of school boys, and they started intensive work. A. Õunapuu published articles on scouting in newspapers, established a newspaper in manuscript covering the scout movement and wrote "The Handbook of a Scout", the manuscript of which got unfortunately lost.³ Scouting was prohibited in Estonia by the occupation forces in 1918, but the boys kept connection underground. The occupation over, scouts got together again and intensive activity started anew. Many scouts volunteered to go to the War of Independence (1918—1920). On the 2nd of April, 1919, A. Õunapuu fell in battle. At his funeral, Estonian scouts made their first public appearance.

After the end of the War of Independence, scouting rapidly spread all over Estonia. Scout patrols were formed in all the towns, beginning with Tartu, Pärnu, Valga, Viljandi, Võru, Haapsalu.⁴

At the same time girl guides were forming patrols. About 10,000 youngsters belonged to the Estonian Malev (Association) of Scouts and the Malev of Girl Guides.

One reason for the explosive development of the movement was the distribution or actually selling, for a very low price, the uniforms bought from the Western armies. This circumstance had brought into membership more youngsters interested in a cheap and beautiful uniform than the substantial activities of the scouts in general. And then, at that time, there was a lack of capable leaders. In 1920, another organization of young people was founded — *Noorseppade Malev* (Association of Young Smiths), and in the beginning many former scouts joined in. Another reason for the decrease of the number of scouts was that girl guides founded a separate organization of their own in 1920.

In 1921 the head-master N. Kann was elected Head Scout of Estonia; he remained that until his death in 1948. The chief of the Headquarters was elected J. Hünerson. The Estonian Scout Organization was given the

¹ Peaskaudi eluloost. — Eesti Skaut, 1933, 1, 6.

² Valma, H. Skautluse algupäevist. — Eesti Skaut, 1936, 8, 152.

³ Noor, J. Eesti skautluse algusaegadest. — In: Eesti skautlus 50 aastat, 187.

⁴ Sirgo, V. Skautluse tekkimine Tartus. — In: Eesti skautlus 50 aastat, 189.

status of a corporate body and the corresponding statute was drafted. Now started intensive and substantial educating of scout leaders.

In 1920, a delegation of ten persons from Estonia took part in the First World-wide Meeting of Scouts — a jamboree in England. It was the first time when Estonian national tricolour was brought to international stage (the Act of the Flag of the Republic of Estonia was a little later adopted by the Estonian Parliament).⁵ In 1921, the state Congress of Estonian Scouts took place in Tartu, where all the patrols were united into the Estonian Scout Malev. Since the year 1922, the international scout uniform was taken in use. At the same time accepting of scout vows was started.

The literature that the scouts had at their disposal was "The Scout Handbook", published in 1921, and "The Scout Calendar-Handbook", published in 1923. Starting from the year 1921, a regular scout magazine "Estonian Scout" was published. Now the movement comprised about 6,000 boys.

The biggest events in homeland were the jamborees — the first at Pirta, the second in Pärnu, and the third in Paralepa.⁶ In 1938 the membership of the Estonian Boy Scouts Association (EBSA) numbered 5,314, of those 27 per cent were "wolf cubs" (the youngest), 49 per cent scouts and 20 per cent senior scouts.

The latest activity period of the EBSA was filled with competing with another scout organization *Noored Kotkad* (Young Eagles). At that time a question of uniting all scout movements had already come up.⁷ Passionate discussions took place, and, finally, general J. Laidoner, the Commander-in-Chief of the military forces in the Republic of Estonia was nominated Headsenior of the youth organizations. The name Estonian Boy Scouts Association that was registered at the International Bureau of Scouts was replaced by Estonian Boy Scouts Union and it included the Young Eagles, too. But the total unification of the scout organizations could not take place because of the beginning of World War II that pushed this problem aside. On the 19th of September, 1940, the Estonian Scout Malev was closed down.

A parallel organization to the scouts was the organization *Noorsepad* (Young Smiths). It was founded in 1920 with the aim to establish ground for Estonian national scouting with only Estonians as members. The supporter of this idea was admiral Pitka, who organized the Board of Governors. The anthem of this organization was "Young Smiths", with lyrics by G. Suits, which lent it the name. The name was to symbolize a young strong healthy person who is ready to contribute to the well-being of the nation. The movement spread all over the country. They had to fight economic hardships, yet they managed to do effective work propagating scouting principles and developing national spirit. Already in 1929 some parts of *Noorsepad* finished working, for then the plan to form the organization of *Noored Kotkad* came up. In 1930 *Noorsepad* became the founders of *Noored Kotkad*. The principles of *Noorsepad* had always been based on the principal ideas of scouting with some differences in outer form as well as general structure.⁸

So, *Noored Kotkad* was another scout organization, founded in 1930. It came into being beside the Estonian Defence Union, and it received various kinds of help from it. There was a competition between *Noored Kotkad* and the Estonian Scout Malev, which was actually quite a good thing, for it provoked public debates which resulted in its more profound

⁵ Zimmermann, K. Eesti skautluse ajaloo. — Eetser, 1989, 1, 3.

⁶ Suurlaagri järelkaja Paralepast. — Eesti Skaut, 1936, 1, 4.

⁷ Uustalu, E. Eesti skautlike organisatsioonide ühendamine ja likvideerimine. — In: Eesti skautlus 50 aastat, 34.

⁸ Linsi, H. Noored sepad. — In: Eesti skautlus 50 aastat, 50.

acquaintance with the principles of the scouting movement, bringing home and deepening the awareness of its necessity, also helping to procure material help for young people.⁹

The aim of *Noored Kotkad* was to bring up good citizens after the principle "Always ready for the glory of homeland". The uniform of *Noored Kotkad* was similar to that of scouts, differing only in colour — steel-blue instead of green; instead of a scout hat they had a boat-shaped cap. The number of members of *Noored Kotkad* increased rapidly, and it formed a particularly national scout organization. The members of the Estonian Scout Malev related to them with a certain amount of caution for they were afraid that if united with *Noored Kotkad* they would lose their international relations. There was also anxiety about the possibility that the Defense Union might start to pay extra attention to the state-defense activities of the young people and the scouting would remain in the background.

The organization of *Noored Kotkad* soon spread also throughout the countryside, and there it became predominant. In 1939, the general number of the members was 18,715, of these 13,631 in the countryside, with only 5,089 in towns and market towns.¹⁰

The beginning of the girl-guide movement in Estonia was parallel to that of scouting. The first patrol of girl guides was formed in 1919 in Tallinn, but some girls had been active before as girl scouts. At first girl guides belonged to the Scout Malev, only in 1920 the formation of independent patrols started.¹¹

The Estonian Girl Guide Malev (EGGM) belonged to the World Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Association from 1922 as a younger member, and from 1926 as a full member. The number of girl guides in the EGGM has never been too big. In 1929 only 710 were registered at the Headquarters, by the year 1938 the number had risen to 2,578. The Headquarters of the EGGM was founded on the 14th of December, 1924. As the Senior of it was elected E. Hünerson. She had twice the possibility of attending the World Conference of Girl Guides (in 1922 and 1924). She also had the possibility of studying the principles of the girl-guide movement directly from the founder of scouting Lord Baden-Powell and his wife Lady Baden-Powell, the Senior of the World Girl-Guide Organization. The statute of scouting was a bit changed and adjusted to girls. Girl guides had jamborees, too — I — 1933 in Narva-Jõesuu, II at Kiidjärve.¹² After the Putsch in 1940, the action of the EGGM was prohibited. Many patrols went on working underground, but not for long.¹³

As boys had *Noored Kotkad* besides the scouts Malev that was guided by the Defense Union, so the Women Home Defense League (*Naiskodu kaitse*) took care of patriotic education of girl guides.¹⁴ The organization called *Kodutütred* was founded. At the beginning of the 1930s, the leader of the Women Home Defence League, Mari Raamot, started organizing it in connection with the composition of the statute of Young Eagles. The statute of the *Kodutütred* organization was adopted in 1932. The aim of the organization was to bring up ethical people, good citizens and women and mothers able to stand up to their challenges and duties. The same as scouts, girl-scouts organization had a successional structure. For passing from one grade to another, a test had to be made — certain knowledge

⁹ Paalman, H. Meie päevaküsimusi. — Eesti Skaut, 1930, 5, 67.

¹⁰ Noored Kotkad 1930—1939. Aastaruanded. Tallinn, 1939.

¹¹ Hint, V. Gaidlus Eestis 1923—1940. — In: Eesti skautlus 50 aastat, 37.

¹² Wilo, M. Esimene gaidide suurlaager — Narva-Jõesuu. — In: Mälestusi gaidirajalt. Toronto, 1988, 22.

¹³ Kaselaan, A. Tartu II rühm. — In: Mälestusi gaidirajalt, 46.

¹⁴ Raamot, M. Minu mälestused. Stockholm, 1962, 148.

and skills were required. The tests contained principles of ethical behaviour, domestic work, taking care of babies, and other practical skills. A characteristic feature in the work of girl guides was getting to know the surroundings of one's native place as well as the Nature of Estonia as a whole, learning the cultural history of Estonia, her literature, music, and arts.

The uniform of the *Kodutütred* organization was a blue-grey blouse with pockets, a badge of the organization on the sleeve, a yellow scarf, a dark-blue skirt with pleats, a dark-blue beret with a yellow tassel on it, grey stockings and black shoes. The badge was the same as that of Young Eagles — a silver-grey eagle with the lily of the scouts and the slogan "Always ready!". The badge was embroidered on the blouse, but there were also metal badges to be worn on the blouse. On the general banner there was a stylized sun, golden-yellow on a light-blue background, with the silver-grey eagle in the middle. Between the sunbeams there were the words, "For the glory of homeland — always ready!".

In difference from girl guides, the leaders of the *Kodutütred* organization were against work camps. The first smaller camp-meeting of the organization took place only in 1936, near Pärnu, and it was a success. From that time on, regular state-wide camp meetings were held, and summer-houses were made use of. With the help of instructors camp- and patrol-leaders knowledge was gained. The girls were also busy with the kinds of handicrafts not taught at school — for example, weaving, scorching patterns onto wooden vessels and painting them, etc. A great amount of time was dedicated to sports. There was a plan to build a real home for the organization, the building was to start in the summer of 1940.

During its eight years of work, the *Kodutütred* organization had become the largest scouting organization in Estonia. The members numbered over 20,000. Only eleven people were working for pay. Everything else came gratis both from patrol-leaders and members of the Women Home Defense League. Thanks to this strong backup-organization the members of *Kodutütred* had much more economic help than girl guides. Also, under the guidance of an organization with such a firm structure, there was no danger for *Kodutütred* to disperse or for the diffusion of task-work. Firm national ideology and the moral support from school-leaders played a part in making the *Kodutütred* movement so popular.¹⁵

Data has preserved about an inquiry that was made in 1937 — the Ministry of Education sent 55 questions to clergymen, inspectors of schools, doctors living in the countryside, and school-leaders.¹⁶ Among others, there was the following question: What kind of outside factors are favourable for the social development of the most important fields of culture? And many answerers stressed the importance of scouting organizations, with the *Kodutütred* and the Young Eagles organizations pointed out in particular. The mentioned benefits of these organizations were, for example, social and personal health care, rational nourishing, tourism in homeland, protection of Nature, the spreading of practical skills among people, home culture, the younger generation's respective attitude towards older people, the growth of patriotism, the development of loyalty to the state, the respect for law, social discipline, care for the property of the society, etc.

Hence, the scouting movement can be considered a good means in bringing up young people. The small Republic of Estonia needed and

¹⁵ Kodutütre käsiraamat. Tallinn, 1936, 2.

¹⁶ Pruuden, S. Kodutütarde organisatsiooni asutamisest ja senisest arengust. — In: Kaitse kodu. Tallinn, 1937, 43.

favoured in every way the ethical activities that were based on mercy and serving others, and gave young people the possibility to show initiative. All these young people, irrespective of the name of the organization they belonged to, were ready to help at a difficult moment, they loved their homeland, regarded others of their age as brothers and sisters, were fond of Nature, they knew a lot about it and cared for it, they learned practical skills as well as good manners.

An important part, both in cultural and sports work, was played by the YMCA and the YWCA. Both international organizations were founded in England, YMCA in 1844 and YWCA in 1855, from there they spread to America and all over the world. In Estonia the YMCA was founded in 1920 and the YWCA in 1921. The YMCA united boys into various hobby-groups. The general aim of the Association was developing a physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially healthy person. The main basis for its activities was Christian education and Christian attitudes towards life. The boys' clubs were subordinated to the General Board of the Association. Every club had a Board and a leader as well. There were clubs of that kind in most larger towns.

The aim of the YWCA was the many-sided developing of girls and preparing them for life spiritually, mentally, and physically, with a particular stress on religious education.

So, girls between the ages of 12 and 20 united into various kinds of YWCA clubs; according to the profile of their activities, they had separate Boards. In this organization they encouraged girls to seek advice from their seniors; they held lecture evenings, discussion meetings, made music together and practised sports; they also took provided occasions for fun. After school the girls took part in summer conferences and could spend their holidays at the YWCA summer-houses.

Another youth organization with a large membership was the Estonian Youth Red Cross (EYRC), founded in 1923.¹⁷ It united more than 15,000 youngsters. The EYRC belonged to the Youth Red Cross Organization that was guided by the League of Red Cross Associations and had departments in 50 states and more than 16 million members all over the world. The aim of this organization was to bring up young people in a firm spirit and take care of developing them in a spiritual, physical, and ethical way. Health-care problems and propaganda got particular attention, also the participating of young people in social work, the principles and necessities of serving fellowmen and society, and establishing friendly relations between youngsters of different countries by correspondence.

By the middle of the 1930s, about 2,500 youngsters had passed an examination in first aid, obtaining the first-aid givers profession.

A wholly religious youth organization was the Secretariat of Church Youth (SCY). However, solely religious youth organizations have never been very popular in Estonia, and the membership of the SCY was never more than 5,000.

The church had much more success when it supported some kind of ethical movement, for example, the temperance movement. The biggest movement of that kind was a youth temperance organization called the Hope Ring that united more than 15,000 youngsters. It was guided by the temperance department of the Estonian Teachers League, and it was especially popular in primary schools. The aim of this organization was to spread the idea of temperance and with games and self-activity bring young people up as true Christians, developing healthy habits and temperate life-style.

Temperate-minded young people were united by the Estonian Youth

¹⁷ Eesti Noorte Punane Rist, 1926, 1, 14.

Temperance League (EYTL), the aim of that league was to instruct special organizations that belonged to this league, arrange temperance courses in study-sets, temperance examinations and essay-writing contests, to be in touch with all temperance and education congresses in homeland, also with the more important activities of neighbouring states' temperate youth, arrange congresses and other temperance-oriented undertakings. The EYTL was founded in 1923 and guided by the Estonian Temperance League. The EYTL published four year-books "The Strength of Youth" in 1924—1929. Altogether 19 books and 88 volumes of a magazine called "The Vernal" have been published by that league. Temperance courses were held together with the Estonian Temperance League, where, beside theoretical background, information was given how to arrange alcohol-free meetings, traffic-games and sports undertakings. The temperance feast-days with processions, church services and many lectures were outstanding. At schools they began with a temperance lesson, students made speeches and the essay-writing contest on temperance themes was always finished in a festive way. In 1930s the EYTL had about 5,000 members.

The most outstanding from among purely Estonian-spirited youth organizations was the Estonian Youth Association (EYA). It was founded in 1919 as an organization of substantial departments and it educated young people in various fields of practical importance, organized sports and cultural work, including bringing the old folk-culture closer to contemporary life. The aim of it was to give young people a possibility for any kind of activities that help a person to grow and develop in both personal and social ways, and by doing so to influence the general cultural development in Estonia. The EYA arranged various kinds of courses, lectures, excursions, and parties, also established libraries and sports clubs. The union also issued a magazine "The Estonian Youth". The culmination of the popularity of this organization was in the 1920s. During the next decade the membership was still more than 10,000, but by the year 1938 it had decreased to 6,000. Most of the EYA members were over 18 years of age, the part of young people under 18 was not more than 15—20%. Similar to the previous organization, but narrower in essence, was the League of Country Youth (LCY), the main aim of which was to preserve the farm traditions and the spirit of the countryside. By the year 1938, this organization had about 7,000 members, most of them over 18.

The Central Federation of Estonian School Youth (CFESY), founded in 1920, was also an important youth organization in Estonia. It united school youth and was based on local groups and unions. Their Secretariat was in Tallinn. The organization's mouthpiece was "The New Land" that declared itself politically independent. In 1922 the CFESY had 1,500 members. It tried to co-ordinate the activities of more active school youth by arranging congresses, insisting on cultural education of young people as well as the necessity of religious teaching at schools, etc.

There were also some leftist youth organizations, with primarily political aims, active in Estonia. One of them was the Estonian Association of Young Proletarians founded in 1920, the work of which was prohibited in 1921, and the Estonian Young Communists' League that continued to work illegally. Among other things, it worked against the scouting movement.

The activities of the Estonian youth organizations were an important contribution to the world outlook of the whole generation. Guided by older people and teachers, and following the example of movements in other countries, the work of these organizations was based on ethical principles. At the same time children and young people had many possibilities of self-realization according to their interests, wishes, and possibilities.

The romanticism of scouting: playfulness, self-activity, life in the woods played a special role in the lives of the young people.

During the second decade of independence in Estonia, the scouting movement, especially national scouting, became involved with the idea of militarization due to the political situation in Europe. Military discipline was strengthened, marching, and shooting were practised, and girls had first-aid training. The concept of national defence and centralized state power were reflected in the ideology of that time.

Despite the deepening authoritarianism (and conflicts between scouts and national scouts) all youth organizations were based on Christian ethics, mercy and love for fellowmen.

Above all, it was Christian ethics together with general religious teaching that formed the basis for education. In this context children and young people were given free hands for self-activity, using their energy and fantasy, developing various kinds of skills and gaining experience, broadening their world outlook. Protection of Nature, health-care, and communicating with others as well as acting like a full member of society — all these things were in the focus of attention.

In 1940 all youth organizations were closed and the principles of educating young people were changed ideologically.

Organizations of communist youth and pioneers were founded. Concepts like Christian education, love for fellowmen, and mercy had to be forgotten. For half a century the self-activity of young people was suppressed.

Now, in the new Estonian Republic, old traditions have come to life again. Scouting organizations are active again, as well as the YMCA and the YWCA. Sunday Schools and various youth organizations are working in churches. Many organizations have lost consecutiveness and are looking for their place among other social movements. Now the formerly forbidden ethical principles are honoured again, and children's desire for self-activity has been given a free outlet. And there are still more possibilities for the activities of the young, namely the ECO — the Estonian Children's Organization.

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NOORSOO-ORGANISATSIIONID EESTIS (1918—1940)

Noorsooühingute tegevus moodustas olulise osa ühiskondlikust liikumisest Eestis. Ühelt poolt suure sisemise aktiivsuse ning teiselt poolt vanemate ja kogenenumate juhtimise tulemuseks oli kestev vaimne ja füüsiline kasvuprotsess oma paljude eripärasustega. Noor, rahvuslikult meelestatud riik oli sügavalt huvitatud täisväärtusliku järelkasvu kujundamisest.

Artiklis on vaatluse alla võetud eelkõige seesugused noorteorganisatsioonid, mille tegevusprogramm on kas samane või väga sarnane rahvusvaheliste noorsoo-organisatsioonide omaga. Suurim kooliealiste laste ja noorte liikumine Eesti Vabariigis aastail 1918—1940 oli skautlus, mis ühendas 1930. aastate lõpuks ligi 50 000 noort. Kaaluka osa sellest moodustas rahvuslik skautlus — noorkotkaste ja kodutütarde liikumine. Skautluse kogu tegevus rajanes kolmel põhilusel: praktilal, mängul ja võistlusel.

Eesti Vabariigis tegutsesid aktiivselt ka Noorte Meeste Kristlik Ühing ja Noorte Naiste Kristlik Ühing. Need koondasid noori huviklubidesse ja rõhutasid kõlbelist kasvatust. Eesti Noorte Punane Rist ühendas enam kui 15 000 noort samariitlast ning tegi noorte hulgas ära suure töö tervishoiu propageerimisel.

Väga tähtis kõlbelises kasvatuses oli ka karskuskasvatus ning seda mitte ainult puht-usuliste noorteorganisatsioonide kaudu (Kiriku Noorsoo Sekretariaat), vaid ka koolides laialt levinud lootusringide (ühendasid üle 15 000 noore) ja Eesti Noorsoo Karskusliidu kaudu.

Eesti noorsooühingute tegevus andis 20 aasta jooksul suure panuse terve põlvkonna maailmanägemisse. Hoolimata autoritarismi süvenemisest põhinesid kõik noorsoo-organisatsioonid kristlikul kõlblusõpetusel, halastusel ja ligimesearmastusel. Eelkõige kristlik kõlblus koos üldise toetava usuõpetusega oli kasvatusel tugev eetiline alus. Noorsoo-organisatsioonid aga andsid selle eetika raames lastele ja noortele suure vabaduse ise-tegevuseks, oma energia maandamiseks, fantaasia arendamiseks ja kasutamiseks, mitmesuguste oskuste ja kogemuste omandamiseks ning silmaringi laiendamiseks. Sugugi vähem tähtis polnud loodushoiu, samuti tervishoiuõpetuse osa, aga ka suhtlemisoskus ja -kogemused.

Мария ТИЛЬК

МОЛОДЕЖНЫЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ В ЭСТОНИИ (1918—1940)

Молодежное движение составляло важную часть общественного движения в Эстонии. Активность и высокий внутренний потенциал молодежи умело направлялись старшими на физическое и духовное обновление нации. Молодая Эстонская Республика была глубоко заинтересована в формировании полноценного потомства.

В статье рассматриваются прежде всего те молодежные организации, программы которых совпадали или были сходными с программами международных молодежных организаций.

Самым массовым молодежным движением в Эстонской Республике был несомненно скаутизм. В 30-е годы в это движение было вовлечено почти 50 000 школьников, юношей и девушек. Крупнейшими скаутскими организациями являлись «Noored Kotkad» (мальчики) и «Kodutütred» (девочки). В основе скаутской системы воспитания лежали весьма популярные среди подростков три принципа — практические навыки, игра и соревнование.

В Эстонской Республике активно действовали Общество молодых христиан и Общество молодых христианок как отделы соответствующих международных организаций. Они вели главным образом кружковую работу, делая упор на этическое воспитание. Эстонский молодежный Красный Крест объединял более 15 000 юных братьев и сестер милосердия, которые занимались общественно полезным трудом в области здравоохранения и пропагандой здорового образа жизни. Важную роль в деле этического воспитания юношества играли церковные молодежные организации, а также общества трезвости в школах («Lootusring», более 15 000 членов) и Союз трезвости эстонской молодежи.

Перечисленные молодежные организации и общества, проповедуя христианскую мораль, милосердие и любовь к ближнему, оказали глубокое влияние на формирование мировоззрения целого поколения. Они предоставляли своим членам свободу действий, давали выход юношеской энергии, учили развитию и применению фантазии, навыкам в различных ремеслах и работах, общению, опыту коллективной деятельности, расширяли кругозор.