

# March to Spala. The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Spala Jamboree

## Why do we need community today?

This is the question we pose at the beginning of the exhibition and we hope it will accompany you throughout your visit. In all likelihood, there will be no single answer to this question, but rather anchor points: in history, in values, in everyday life.

The exhibition *March to Spala. The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Spala Jamboree* commemorates one of the most impressive events in the history of Polish Scouting – the 1935 Polish Scout Jubilee Jamboree in Spala. But the exhibition will not only be a reconstruction of the past. We will try to show what community was then, how it was built, what it meant to young people and which of these values are still important today.

Scouting was – and still is in these uncertain, fast-changing times – an attempt to answer questions about education, responsibility, service, relationship with the state, but also about freedom and independence.

We believe that the story of the Spala Jamboree can resonate today – not only as a story about the past, but also as a starting point to discuss what really unites us today.

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## Polish Scouts at the World Scout Jamborees until 1933

Since the beginning of the Scout Movement in the Polish lands, its representatives have sought to establish contacts with the international Scouting community. Participation in world Jamborees was not only an opportunity to exchange experiences, but also to emphasise Polish national identity during the difficult times of statehood formation. By 1933, Polish Scouts were actively participating in international Scout Jamborees, both in the men's and women's movements. Polish delegations stood out for their high level of organisation, camp skills and commitment to national traditions. Their presence at the Jamborees helped to popularise the idea of Scouting both in Poland and internationally.

### 1913 – 3<sup>rd</sup> All-British Scout Jamboree, Birmingham (UK)

The first significant event in which a delegation of Polish Scouts took part was the 3<sup>rd</sup> All-British Scout Jamboree in Birmingham in 1913. Although it was organised by the British Scouts, it was international and brought together participants from different countries.



The Polish delegation, with its 43 members, represented Scout organisations from the Russian, Austrian and Prussian partitions. It was officially led by Michał Affanasowicz. It was very important that the Polish Scouts performed under the white and red flag, which emphasised their national identity, even though Poland did not yet exist as an independent state.

The presence of the Polish Scouts was noticed and appreciated by the founder of world Scouting, Robert Baden-Powell himself. Andrzej Małkowski, the founder of Polish Scouting, who was a member of the delegation, was awarded the 'Medal for Merit' in recognition of the dynamic development of the Polish Scout Movement.

## **1920 – 1<sup>st</sup> World Scout Jamboree, London (UK)**

After the end of the First World War, the international Scout Movement faced the challenge of rebuilding links between the youth of different nations. The first ever World Scout Jamboree, held in London in 1920, became the answer to this need. Some 8,000 Scouts from 34 countries attended the event, which aimed to reinforce the idea of brotherhood and peace.

The Jamboree was held in London's Olympia exhibition hall, which was transformed into a Scout town. The organisers covered the floor with a thick layer of earth and sowed grass to create a camp atmosphere.

Poland received an invitation to the Jamboree, but the official delegation could not attend due to the ongoing Polish-Soviet war. The Polish Scouting authorities sent a telegram explaining their absence. The message was warmly received, with General Baden-Powell praising the attitude of the Polish Scouts and sending them words of support. Nevertheless, the white and red flag was present at the event – carried by a young Scout Tadeusz Jabłoński, son of a Polish diplomat.

This Jamboree began the tradition of international Scout meetings, which are still held regularly today, bringing together young people from all over the world.

## **1924 – 2<sup>nd</sup> World Scout Jamboree, Copenhagen (Denmark)**

In 1924, Poland participated for the first time in the World Scout Jamboree, held in Ermelunden near Copenhagen. It was one of the most important Scouting events of its time, bringing together some 5,000 participants from 33 countries.

The Polish delegation consisted of 160 people who set off from Gdynia. The official representation of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego, ZHP) consisted of 48 Scouts and



five Leaders, led by Scoutmaster Adolf Heidrich. The rest of the group was part of an ‘overseas expedition’, led by Scoutmaster Jan Grabowski.

The Jamboree was not only an opportunity to meet Scouts from all over the world, but also a sporting competition. The Scouts competed in 11 disciplines, including camping, earning Scouts skills, swimming, folk singing and national dances.

The Polish team achieved excellent results:

- First place for the best organised camp (ex aequo with Norway)
- Second place in the camp skills category
- Second place in the national dance competition

Poland finished fifth overall, just three points behind Norway. The winners were Scouts from the United States, second place went to the United Kingdom and third to Hungary.

Polish Scouts not only excelled in the competition, but also promoted Poland internationally. Their discipline, organisation and skills were praised by Scouts from other countries.

Diplomatic letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that ‘from the point of view of national propaganda, the success went far beyond a purely sporting demonstration’. In this way, the Scouts became a living symbol of a modern, strong Poland, reborn after years of partition.

Participation in the World Jamboree in Denmark was a turning point for Polish Scouting. For the first time, the Scouts were able to demonstrate their skills in an international environment. It was also proof that Polish Scouting was developing at a high level and could compete with the best teams in the world.

## **1929 – 3<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree, Arrowe Park (UK)**

Held in 1929 at Arrowe Park, England, the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree had a very special character – it was the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Scout Movement. For this reason it became known as the Coming of Age Jamboree.

It was the largest Scouts’ Jamboree to date. More than 30,000 participants from 35 countries took part in this extraordinary event, with an additional 300,000 or so visitors.

Poland sent about 500 Scouts to the Jamboree, divided into three troop groups: the Warsaw Troop had 150 Scouts, the Silesian Troop had 140, and the so-called Combined Troop included Scouts from Poznań, Lviv, Kraków, Gdańsk and other cities.



The Polish delegation was led by Scoutmaster Stanisław Sedlaczek, who was responsible for the organisation and representation of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP) in the international arena.

The 1929 Jamboree was not a competition – instead of a sporting contest, participants showcased their skills, culture and national traditions. The Polish Scouts attracted particular attention with their unusual ‘Living Map of Poland’ display – they formed the shape of the country out of flags and then performed traditional folk dances from different regions. It was one of the most memorable events of the entire Jamboree.

The foreign Scouts were impressed by the uniform, organisation and discipline of the Polish team. The Scouts proved that Polish Scouting is developing dynamically and has an important place in the international Scouting community.

One of the most special moments of the Jamboree was the Peace Ceremony, attended by representatives of all nations. The founder of Scouting, Robert Baden-Powell, buried the golden axe symbolising the end of conflict and division. Each delegation also received a golden arrow as a sign of friendship and unity.

Participation in the Jamboree in England was not only an opportunity for Polish Scouts to exchange experiences, but also a chance to strengthen ZHP’s position on the international stage. The Scouts gained recognition, demonstrated their organisational strength and effectively promoted Polish culture.

This was the last Jamboree in which Robert Baden-Powell was actively involved as an organiser. In the years that followed, he gradually handed over responsibility to a younger generation of Scout Leaders.

The 1929 Jamboree in England was the largest Scout Jamboree before the outbreak of the Second World War. It was proof that Scouting not only unites young people, but also builds character, teaches cooperation and helps to build a world without divisions. By participating in this event, Polish Scouts joined the ranks of the world’s most important Scouting organisations, and the experience gained contributed to the further development of Scouting in Poland.



## **1931 – Slavic Scout Jamboree, Prague, Czechoslovakia**

Although it was not an official jamboree, the 1931 Slavic Scout Jamboree in Prague was of great importance for the development of Polish Scouting. Poland was represented by no less than 1,077 Boy Scouts from 13 Provinces and 332 Girl Guides from 12 Provinces – the first time there had been such a large and diverse participation. A separate female team under the command of Scoutmaster Jadwiga Linder received special recognition. It was pointed out that ‘the participation of the Guides was an opportunity to foster contacts with Girl Scouts from other parts of the world’, and their independence and resourcefulness impressed even the representatives of the Scout Office and the foreign guests at the Jamboree.

The Poles stood out for their ingenuity – the Scouts built a camp kiosk, common rooms and a field altar, and the Guides ran a camp restaurant which became a meeting place for the Jamboree participants. The Czech press wrote appreciatively about the Polish presence, highlighting the high level of organisation and commitment. The Prague Jamboree was not only a form of cooperation between Slavic Scouts, but also an important step towards the equality of girls in Scouting and the integration of Polish Scouting into the international community.

## **1933 – 4<sup>th</sup> World Scout Jamboree, Gödöllő, Hungary**

The 4<sup>th</sup> World Scout Jamboree was held in Gödöllő, Hungary, from 2 to 13 August 1933. It was the first such event to be held in Central Europe and brought together some 26,000 Scouts from 46 countries. Among the participants was a large representation of Polish Scouts, for whom the Jamboree became a unique event, both in organisational and symbolic terms. Around 1,100 Polish Scouts from different regions of the country took part in the Jamboree. Such a large presence underlined the importance of Scouting in Poland and its dynamic development in the inter-war period.

The Poles had their own sub-camp, which quickly became one of the most recognisable at the whole Jamboree. The Scouts demonstrated their camping, pioneering and drill skills, which attracted a lot of interest from the foreign Scouts. They built wooden structures and huts reminiscent of traditional Polish forest shelters. They demonstrated discipline, organisation and hard work, which was much appreciated by the other participants. The Polish Scouts’ camp was carefully prepared and decorated with national symbols.

In addition to Scouting skills, the Scouts promoted Polish culture and traditions. The camp hosted folk dance performances and displays of regional costumes, concerts of Scout and patriotic songs, and historical re-enactments of events in Polish history. Thanks to these events, the Polish camp has become a meeting place for Scouts from all over the world and an excellent showcase for Polish Scouting.



The 4<sup>th</sup> World Scout Jamboree also had a diplomatic dimension. Hungary is a country with close ties to Poland, and this was emphasised throughout the Jamboree. One of the highlights was the meeting of the Polish Scouts with the Hungarian Regent, Miklós Horthy, who in his speech expressed his sympathy and friendship towards Poland.

The Scouts also met Robert Baden-Powell, who visited national camps and emphasised the role of Scouting in building peace between nations.

The Jamboree was also an opportunity to integrate with peers from other countries. Sharing campfires, workshops and talks built international friendships that often lasted many years.

The 4<sup>th</sup> World Jamboree strengthened international ties and highlighted the importance of Scouting in peace building. For many young people, it was an unforgettable adventure that influenced the further development of Scouting in Poland.

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**Question: In times when there was no state, the community was a space of hope and self-education. Today we have independence, schools, access to knowledge – but do we have the communities that give meaning and direction to our lives?**

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## **The situation of ZHP in the 1930s**

The 1930s were a period of dynamic change and growing tension within the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego, ZHP). Since its inception, the organisation had skilfully combined patriotic values, civic education and social service, but the changing political and social conditions in Poland had a significant impact on the direction of its development.

### **Political conditions and the impact of Sanation**

The seizure of power by the Sanation camp after the May coup of 1926 gradually affected the activities of ZHP. The state authorities sought to link the Scout Movement more closely to state structures. The first moment of this process was the speech of the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, Sławomir Czerwiński at the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of ZHP in 1929. The minister expected ZHP to become



more involved in state education. The newly elected leadership of the Association did not advocate total subordination to the state, but the slow changes that followed reflected the growing influence of the state authorities on the organisation.

In 1931, at the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Kraków, the concept of ZHP as a universal organisation linked to state structures was officially adopted. Such a direction was controversial and led to internal conflicts among Scout Leaders, especially those associated with the independent Scouting strand.

## Ideological and organisational change

Under the leadership of Silesian Voivode Michał Grażyński, who was elected president of ZHP in 1931, the organisation became increasingly aligned with the policies of the state authorities. Grażyński emphasised that Scouting should be based on three fundamental ideas: love of God, state thought and true love of the nation. Under his leadership, numerous Scout outposts were established, including in Bucz, Nierodzim and Górki Wielkie.

In 1936, ZHP adopted a new statute, which linked the organisation even more closely to the state. Józef Piłsudski became the ideological patron of the Association. The Scout Movement was to prepare young people for a conscious national service based on patriotic values, discipline and readiness to defend the country. By decree of the Council of Ministers of 8 April 1936, ZHP was registered as an association of higher utility. However, the increasing interference of the state in the activities of ZHP led to dissatisfaction among some leaders, many of whom reduced their activities or left the ranks of the organisation.

## Organisational structure and specialisations

ZHP underwent significant structural changes in the 1930s. Strong Scout troops were established, ensuring continuity of training from cub Scout to rover Scout. Scouting specialisations such as sailing, gliding, **ballooning and amateur radio were also developed during this period. Training centres played an important** role in the training of leaders.

Despite its dynamic development, ZHP also struggled with internal tensions. Not all leaders accepted the political direction of the organisation. At the same time, the Scout Movement remained one of the most important organisations for educating young people in the spirit of patriotism and social responsibility.

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**Reflection: Do we need movements today that educate through action, responsibility and service? Where can a young person learn to be part of a greater whole?**

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## **Spała – history, symbolism and meaning**

### **Spała – from tsarist residence to centre of state events**

Spała, a hamlet in central Poland, was for decades a prestigious hunting lodge and centre of political life. Its history dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a hunting lodge was built there on the orders of Tsar Alexander II and became a resting place for Russian tsars. After Poland regained its independence in 1918, the residence was taken over by the Polish state and Spała became the summer residence of the presidents of the Second Republic. For decades it was not only a resting place for the political elite, but also an important centre of cultural and social life in the Second Polish Republic. It became a symbol of prestige and statesmanship, attracting political, scientific and cultural personalities.

### **The Bison Statue – the symbol of Spała**

One of the most characteristic elements of the landscape of Spała is the **statue of a bison**, which was brought to the hamlet around 1929 on the initiative of the Polish President Ignacy Mościcki. Made of cast iron and weighing four tonnes, it represents a life-size bison. Its history dates back to 1862, when it was erected in Zwierzyniec in the Białowieża Forest by order of Tsar Alexander II as a symbol of the power and hunting tradition of the Russian rulers.

During the First World War, the monument experienced a series of vicissitudes and was eventually returned to Poland after the country regained its independence. Once in Spała, it became an integral part of the landscape and the unofficial coat of arms of the hamlet, symbolising its forest surroundings and the hunting traditions of the presidents of the Second Polish Republic.

### **Spała during the Second World War – change of function of the residence**

After the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Spała came under German occupation and its significance changed considerably. Adolf Hitler's decree of September of that year established the Supreme



Military Command 'East', whose headquarters were located in Spała. As a result of organisational changes in the German military administration, from July 1940 Spała became the headquarters of the military command of the General Government.

Such an important military infrastructure remained of interest to the intelligence service of the Union for Armed Struggle (Związek Walki Zbrojnej, ZWZ), which had its outpost in Spała. Unfortunately, it was disbanded in 1941 as a result of denunciations by a Gestapo collaborator. Most of the conspirators were executed.

In the surrounding forests, the Germans carried out intensive forestry for the war industry, causing massive environmental damage.

The retreating German army devastated the residence, taking away most of the palace's furnishings. After the occupation of Spała by the Red Army in January 1945, the residential buildings were burnt down, closing the prestigious chapter in its history.

However, the memory of Spała's political, social and cultural importance has survived, and the cast-iron statue of a bison – one of the most recognisable elements of the hamlet's landscape – remains as the symbol of its former splendour.

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## Polish Scout Jubilee Jamboree in Spała 1935

### Origin of the idea

Towards the end of 1932, the idea of organising a National Scout Jamboree to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Scout Movement in Poland was born. The initiators of the event were inspired by the success of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Scout Jamboree in Gödöllő, Hungary.

In 1933, the Leadership of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego, ZHP) established the Jamboree Committee at the Main Scout Headquarters. It was headed by Scoutmaster Władysław Ludwig, an experienced organiser and participant in international Scout Jamborees. The task of the committee was to develop a concept for the event, define its objectives and select a suitable venue.

### Objectives of the Jamboree



In October 1934, the Chief Scout officially set out the main objectives of the Jamboree:

- To celebrate 25 years of Scouting in Poland – to highlight the achievements of the movement and its role in the education of young people
- To summarise past achievements – to present the development of Scouting over the years to the public and government authorities
- To set the direction for the future – to strengthen the organisation and emphasise its role in civic and patriotic education

It was decided that the Jamboree would be divided into two camps – one for Scouts and one for Guides. Such a solution had already been used at the 1924 National Jamboree.

## Organisational structure

On 14 November 1934, a Supreme Jamboree Command was established to co-ordinate the preparation and conduct of the event. It was headed by Scoutmaster Antoni Olbromski as Chief Jamboree Commander. The organisational structure included:

- Commander of the Girl Guides' Jamboree Scoutmaster Helena Śliwowska
- Commander of the Boy Scouts' Jamboree Scoutmaster Ignacy Wądołkowski
- Chief Quartermaster of the Jamboree Scoutmaster Stanisław Lange
- Head of the Press, Propaganda and Representation Department Scoutmaster Józef Sosnowski
- Chief Chaplain Rev. Scoutmaster Marian Luzar
- Chief Medical Officer of the Jamboree Dr Scoutmaster Jadwiga Zienkiewiczówna

Each of these leaders headed the staff responsible for different aspects of the Jamboree's organisation, from logistics to medical care and press information.

## Why Spała? – state support and honorary patronage

The choice of Spała as the venue for the Polish Scout Jubilee Jamboree in 1935 was a decision of great symbolic and political significance. The event took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Polish Scout Movement, and its organisation at the President's summer residence was intended to emphasise the close relationship between Scouting and the state. It was the first all-Polish Jamboree organised in the spirit of the new educational policy of the Second Polish Republic, strengthening the role of the Scout Movement as an organisation that educates the young generation in the spirit of patriotism, discipline and willingness to serve Poland.



The Jamboree was held shortly after the death of Józef Piłsudski (12 May 1935), which affected its atmosphere. The Piłsudskiite idea was very much alive in the Scout Movement and in February 1935 the Marshal himself took over the patronage of the Jamboree.

The Spała Jamboree was supported by the highest authorities of the Second Polish Republic. A Committee of Honour was set up, which included:

- President of the Republic of Poland Ignacy Mościcki and his wife Maria Mościcka
- Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Walery Sławek
- Speaker of the Sejm Dr Kazimierz Świtalski
- Speaker of the Senate Władysław Raczkiewicz
- General Inspector of the Armed Forces General Edward Rydz-Śmigły
- Foreign Minister Józef Beck
- Head of the Ministry of Military Affairs General Tadeusz Kasprzycki
- Primate of Poland Rev. Cardinal Dr August Hlond
- Metropolitan Archbishop of Warsaw Rev. Cardinal Dr Aleksander Kakowski

The Organising Committee was also set up, with over 70 members, including government representatives and people of merit in the Scout Movement, such as Olga Małkowska, Jadwiga Falkowska and Tadeusz Strumiłło.

The organisation of the Jamboree in Spała was therefore a tribute to the heritage of the Scout Movement and a demonstration of the unity of Scout youth with state policy.

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## Preparations for the Jamboree

### Quartermaster Service – organisation and role

The Quartermaster Service of the Polish Scout Jubilee Jamboree in Spała in 1935 faced an enormous logistical challenge. Not only did they have to plan the entire infrastructure, but they also had to ensure that the event ran smoothly. The preparations required a huge effort and excellent organisational skills. Thanks to the commitment of hundreds of Scouts and the support of state institutions, it was possible to create a reliably functioning ‘Scout town’ that could accommodate thousands of participants over a two-week period.

The Chief Quartermaster was responsible for all the material needs of the Jamboree, including:

- building and equipping the camp



- supplying equipment and materials
- catering arrangements
- transport and logistics
- budget management and expenditure control
- organisation of trade on the Jamboree site

In order to carry out these tasks effectively, several specialist departments have been set up, including an Economic Committee and Jamboree Equipment, Food, Communications, Treasury and Commercial Departments.

## **Building the infrastructure**

The Jamboree in Spała required the creation of an extensive infrastructure from scratch. One of the first tasks was to demarcate and prepare the area for the Scout camps. Camp boundaries, a road network, bridges, footbridges and transport links were mapped.

Major works included:

- construction of 3.5 km of road by 200 Scouts from the Scout Work Centre in 90 days
- demarcation of camp boundaries – marking out sites for tents, warehouses, trading posts, a hospital and special services
- preparation of water and electricity networks – 137 Abyssinian wells, 12.5 km of electricity network, 2.7 km of megaphone lines and 2 km of shortwave radio lines have been installed.
- construction of bridges and footbridges – including two 2-tonne bridges and nine footbridges over the Pilica River.

This work was carried out with limited funding, which required the economical use of materials and the maximum use of available resources.

## **Supplies and building materials**

164 buildings and pavilions were erected, including warehouses, kitchens, a slaughterhouse, commercial pavilions and a hospital. The construction used:

- 107,476 m<sup>3</sup> of planks
- 373,241 m<sup>3</sup> of squared timber
- 37,350 bricks
- 6,240 kg of nails



- 752 rolls of roofing felt

Materials were transported mainly by horse-drawn carts, while rail deliveries were routed through Tomaszów Mazowiecki and Spała.

## **Water supply**

The Quartermaster Service ensured access to clean water by building three independent supply systems:

- Abyssinian wells – 137 wells were installed, serving the girls' camp and part of the boys' camp
- Spała waterworks – two electric pumps pumped water to the main tank with a capacity of 36 m<sup>3</sup>
- dug wells – five wells supplied water to other parts of the camp

Water was delivered by tankers to more remote locations. It was agreed that each Jamboree participant would have an average of 10 litres per day for drinking and cooking.

## **Catering arrangements**

It was necessary to organise an efficient food supply system for the Jamboree participants. The original plan was to use one company, but due to the scale of the project it was decided to work with many suppliers.

Nine food shelters for the Girl Guides and eight for the Boy Scouts were built, as well as a central kitchen and a slaughterhouse. Brick floors were laid in the kitchens and the slaughterhouse, and all catering facilities were self-sufficient.

The amount of produce used is impressive:

- 166,188 kg of bread
- 137,980 kg of potatoes
- 31,000 kg of beef
- 101,520 litres of milk
- 28,500 kg of sugar
- 15,075 kg of pasta

The delivery and distribution of food required a great deal of commitment from the Scouts who worked in the warehouses and kitchens every day.

## **Transport and logistics**



To transport the Jamboree participants, it was necessary to obtain railway concessions and organise special trains from all over Poland. The railway station in Spała was adapted to handle the increased traffic, and a siding was built for the delivery of goods.

The Quartermaster Service was also responsible for transporting equipment and construction materials. Both day-rate and piecework horse-drawn carts were used, delivering materials even from Łódź, Piotrków, and Sulejów

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**Reflection: Spała was a dress rehearsal for a civic community – made up of young, committed people who created their own camp town. Their trust, cooperation and competence impressed even the highest authorities of the state.**

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**Question: Would we today trust young people enough to entrust them with real responsibility for the common good?**

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## **Scouts' health at the Jamboree – the medical service in action**

### **Organisation of health care**

The 1935 Scout Jamboree in Spała attracted thousands of participants, which required a carefully planned medical service. The main objective was not only to treat illnesses and injuries, but also to ensure hygienic living conditions in the camp. The activities of the health service focused on several areas: the organisation of a field hospital, medical posts, sanitary inspections and the quality control of water and food.

Medical coordination was the responsibility of the Chief Medical Officer, supported by the Jamboree Health Council, made up of doctors and health professionals. Sanitary vans and special inspection units were also at his disposal.



## **Field hospital and medical facilities**

At the heart of the Jamboree's medical provision was a field hospital set up under tents. It had 60 beds, including 12 for infectious patients. A further 40 beds could be added if needed. The hospital had a surgical ward, an emergency room and a dental clinic.

In the Girl Guide camp, each troop had a designated hygienist and its own first aid kit, and each Province had a dressing station. The Central Infirmary was also established. In the Boy Scout camp, medical points were organised at sub-camp level.

## **Disease prevention and hygiene control**

To prevent the spread of disease, special attention was paid to the hygiene of the camp. Water quality was regularly checked and the Abyssinian wells and waterworks were under the supervision of specialists. Water samples were taken every three days for bacteriological analysis. The detection of coliform bacteria led to immediate preventive measures, including a ban on drinking raw water.

The camp also installed a network of latrines, which were regularly disinfected with lime. To maintain cleanliness, Scouts were encouraged to follow hygiene rules and keep their accommodation tidy.

## **Treatment and most common diseases**

During the Jamboree, 90 Boy Scouts and 71 Girl Guides were treated at the hospital, while 359 medical consultations and 188 dental procedures were performed at the outpatient clinics. The most commonly reported illnesses were tonsillitis, pharyngitis and influenza, with isolated cases of typhoid fever, measles and pneumonia.

In cases requiring prolonged hospitalisation, patients were transferred to nearby hospitals in Rawa Mazowiecka, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Łódź and Warsaw. In total, 23 people were referred for such treatment.

## **Working with government institutions**

The organisation of health care at the Jamboree required the cooperation of many institutions. Government agencies, including the Ministry of Social Welfare, the National Institute of Hygiene and the Polish Red Cross, supported the Scouts by providing specialised laboratories, medical equipment and supplies. In this way, it was possible to ensure that the Jamboree participants received an adequate level of health care.



## **The legacy of the Jamboree health service**

The health service's actions at the Spała Jamboree became a model for future Scout events. They showed how medical care could be effectively organised under field conditions, not only to treat the sick, but also to provide prevention and health education.

The Jamboree Health Service proved that the Scout values of responsibility, cooperation and service can be effectively applied in the field of public health.

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## **Spiritual care**

### **Preparations**

Before the start of the Jamboree, the Chief Chaplain of ZHP, Rev. Scoutmaster Marian Luzar, took extensive measures to ensure that the Scouts and Guides would receive appropriate spiritual care. The organisation of the Jamboree chaplaincy was a complex undertaking, with many clergy not sure of their participation until the last minute.

In preparation, cooperation was established with various faith communities. The Warsaw-Chełm Orthodox Consistory provided a chaplain for the Orthodox Scouts and Guides, and Pastor Kubaczek took care of the Protestants. The Catholic clergy also played a special role, with many of them involved in organising religious life at the Jamboree.

### **Presence of clergy and organisation of church services**

Eighty-three Catholic clergy took part in the Jamboree, including 59 chaplains from Poland, 17 from Hungary, six from Slovakia and one from Latvia. In addition, two Protestant pastors and one Orthodox chaplain were present in Spała and took part in the opening ceremony.

The pastoral care of the Jamboree covered the entire camp area. Sixteen field altars were erected, 13 of them in the Scout camp and three in the Guide camp. The parish priest of Inowłódz, Rev. Stanisław Kowalski, and the Oratorians from Studzianna, who provided liturgical equipment, were of great help.

Each Scout and Guide subcamp had its own chaplain responsible for liturgy and pastoral care. The chaplains organised masses, confessions and visited the sick in the camp hospitals.



## Major religious ceremonies:

- 14 July – Mass for the opening of the Jamboree, celebrated in the sports stadium in the presence of the President of the Republic of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki. The liturgy was celebrated by Rev. Marian Luzar and the homily was given by Rev. Jan Humpola, Chaplain to the President of the Republic of Poland
- 15 July – Mass for former Scouts from 1910-1918, celebrated by the Chaplain of the Scout Jamboree, Rev. Lech Ziemiński
- 16 July – Mass for Esperanto Scouts
- 20 July – Funeral Mass for the repose of the soul of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, celebrated at the Wawel Cathedral
- 21 July – Scouting ceremony at Jasna Góra with the participation of over 1,600 Scouts. The Mass was presided over by Bishop Teodor Kubina. During the ceremony the Scouts made a votive offering – a silver Scout's Cross, which was hung by the miraculous image of Our Lady of Częstochowa
- 23 July – Masses at the end of the Jamboree, celebrated in the sub-camps

## Daily religious life

Masses were celebrated and confessions were heard on a daily basis at the Jamboree site. Chaplains visited the sick in the camp hospitals and gave spiritual support to the Scouts. In total, around 500 masses were celebrated, more than 1,500 communions were distributed and nine sermons were preached during the Jamboree.

Mass intentions had a special place in the service. Prayers were offered for, amongst others:

- the repose of the soul of Marshal Józef Piłsudski
- fallen and deceased Scouts and Guides
- prosperity of the country and the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association
- Scouts and Guides from home and abroad

## The importance of spiritual care at the Jamboree

Thanks to the efforts of the Chief Chaplain and his colleagues, the Jamboree in Spała had not only a patriotic and Scouting dimension, but also a spiritual one. Religious rituals reinforced Scout values, built a sense of community and gave strength for future challenges. The ceremony at Jasna Góra and the prayers for the homeland were an expression of the deep faith of the Scout youth who identified Scouting with the national tradition and spiritual heritage of Poland.



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# Girl Guides at the Spała Jamboree

## Organisation of the Girl Guides' Jamboree

The Polish Scout Jubilee Jamboree in Spała was divided into two separate structures: Girl Guides' Jamboree and Boy Scouts' Jamboree. While the Boy Scouts' Jamboree was divided into subcamps consisting of mixed provinces, the Girl Guides' Jamboree retained the traditional division into provinces. Each had specific roles and was responsible for particular aspects of the camp, allowing for effective management and full involvement of the participants.

The Girl Guides' Jamboree Commander was Scoutmaster Helena Śliwowska, whose task was not only to supervise the Jamboree but also to take care of its educational programme. She was assisted by her deputy and programme officer, Scoutmaster Jadwiga Wierzbianańska, and logistics and facilities were the responsibility of the Quartermaster, Scoutmaster Alina Ratajczakowa. Scoutmaster Sabina Marcinkowska-Zawodzka also played an important role as Camp Leader, ensuring discipline and order in the Jamboree area.

## Preparations for the Girl Guides' Jamboree

Preparations for the Girl Guides' Jamboree began long before the official opening. Teams had to meet certain requirements to take part in this prestigious event. The Guides had to have camping experience – at least half the members of a troop had to have attended at least one camp in the previous two years. They were also required to have full camping equipment and up-to-date medical certificates confirming their fitness to attend the Jamboree.

It was interesting to see how the roles of the Guides at the Jamboree were identified. Unlike the Scouts, who wore coloured armbands, the Girl Guides at the Jamboree had coloured triangles sewn onto their uniforms with the appropriate symbols. For example, Quartermasters wore red triangles with the letter 'K', Camp Leaders wore yellow triangles with the letter 'O' and Nurses wore white triangles with a red cross.

## Camp life



The Girl Guides' camp was a hive of activity, a place not only for recreation but also for intensive educational and personal development activities. Each Province had a designated 'area of Jamboree life' which it was responsible for:

- Warsaw Province organised assemblies and official ceremonies
- Kraków Province carried out activities in the field of Scout education and the training of Guide Leaders
- Poznań Province was responsible for organising sports activities and outdoor games
- Silesian Province created theatrical and artistic programmes
- Lviv Province was involved in Scout pioneering and camping activities
- Vilnius Province ran workshops on handicrafts and traditional Scouting techniques
- Łódź Province was responsible for hygiene activities and the administration of first aid

A special event at the Girl Guides' Jamboree was the Province Festival, where each unit had the opportunity to showcase its achievements. Demonstrations ranged from traditional Scouting techniques to modern methods of working with young people. The Jamboree was also an opportunity to exchange experiences with the Polish community abroad and foreign Guides, who came to Spała in large numbers.

## **Participation of foreign Guides**

Delegations of Girl Guides from various countries came to Spała. The group from the Czech Republic was particularly large, with 166 Girl Guides taking part in the Jamboree. They were accommodated in a separate camp, although they took part in joint activities with the Polish Guides. In addition, two Guides from France took part in the Jamboree and were directly assigned to the Jamboree Command.

Not all foreign groups were equally involved in Jamboree life – some delegations actively participated in activities and services, while others had a more limited role. Some of the Guides from the Polish community abroad travelled to Warsaw for a day to take part in the Second Jamboree of Polish Youth from Abroad.

## **A unique event for Girl Guiding**

The Girl Guides' Jamboree in Spała was the largest gathering of Girl Guides in the world to date. There were 7,568 participants, including 6,521 Polish Guides, 460 Polish Guides from abroad, 242 Girl Scouts, 225 Leaders and 120 former Guides. For many of the Guides, it was a unique experience that strengthened their Scout identity and sense of community.

## **Legacy of the Girl Guides' Jamboree**



The Jamboree in Spała left a lasting mark in the history of Polish Scouting. It was not only an opportunity to celebrate the organisation's anniversary, but also a platform for sharing experiences and building the future of the Girl Guide Movement. The activities carried out during the Jamboree, as well as the working methods developed, have had a great impact on the further development of Girl Guiding in Poland and abroad.

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**Reflection: The Jamboree lasted two weeks – but for many participants it was the start of a lifetime of values. The community they built lasted longer than the festivities. It has survived the test of war and lives on in the memory of generations.**

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## Boy Scouts' Jamboree

### Preparations for the Jamboree

Preparations for the Boy Scouts' Jamboree began well in advance. The Main Scout Headquarters was responsible for the organisation of the event and had established its basic principles as early as in 1934. A detailed plan was drawn up for the layout of the camp, the sanitary facilities, the organisation of services and a schedule of events.

Each Province was assigned specific organisational tasks, which not only made the Jamboree run more smoothly, but also taught the Scouts responsibility. For example:

- Warsaw Province – organisation of the senior Scouts' run and fieldwork
- Mazovian Province – communication and liaison
- Silesian Province – pioneering and camp construction
- Lviv Province – rescue training
- Poznań Province – organisation of the junior ranks' run
- Lublin Province – supervising the shooting range
- Vilnius Province – organisation of the main arena
- Zagłębie Province – running the theatre
- Volhynian Province – preparation of the main campfire

This ensured that each participant had their own responsibilities, highlighting the value of self-reliance and cooperation in Scouting.



## Daily life at the Jamboree

The camp was divided into eight sub-camps, which functioned independently but also took part in joint events. Each had its own infirmary, meeting places and command posts.

The day at the Jamboree began early in the morning with a wake-up call and an assembly. After breakfast, the Scouts took part in exercises and themed activities such as:

- military training – learning drill, weapon handling and shooting
- pioneering activities – building bridges, footbridges, shelters and fortifications
- fitness competitions – Scout running, climbing, obstacle courses
- nature observation – learning to identify plants and animals
- communication and coding – training in communication and working with radios

These tasks were designed to prepare the young Scouts for life in the field and to develop their practical skills.

In the afternoon, various demonstrations and competitions were organised to showcase the Scouts' skills. The evenings ended with joint campfires, singing and storytelling led by experienced leaders.

## Highlights of the Jamboree

### Opening ceremony

On 14 July 1935, the official opening ceremony of the Jamboree was held in the presence of the highest representatives of the state, including the President of the Republic of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki, who was the honorary patron of the event. The ceremony was full of patriotic references and highlighted the role of Scouting in the education of young people.

### Fitness and drill demonstrations

During the Jamboree, Scouts had the opportunity to take part in special military exercises. These included shooting demonstrations, drill exercises and a demonstration of defensive skills. This included cooperation with the Polish Army, which emphasised the importance of Scouting in developing civic and patriotic attitudes.

### International Scout meetings



Spała also hosted representatives of Scout organisations from different countries, allowing participants to share experiences and learn together. Polish Scouts had the opportunity to present their skills and Scouting traditions, and took part in international integration meetings.

### **Jamboree tours**

Scouts were also able to take part in sightseeing tours. The Jamboree included tours of Warsaw, Kraków and Jasna Góra. These were opportunities to learn about important sites related to Polish history and culture.

### **Scout campfires and evenings**

Each evening at the Jamboree ended around a campfire where the Scouts sang songs, listened to stories and shared experiences. This was not only a form of integration, but also an opportunity to recall Scout values and traditions.

### **Scout Exhibition**

An important part of the Jamboree was an exhibition showcasing the achievements of Scouting. It was an opportunity to showcase the history, achievements and methods of Scouting. The exhibition was complemented by themed stands displaying equipment used by Scouts, models of campsites and photographic documentation of the early years of ZHP. A part of the exhibition was devoted to international Scouting, emphasising the openness of Polish Scouting to cooperation with foreign organisations.

## **Liaison and communication at the Jamboree**

The smooth running of communications during the Jamboree was the responsibility of Mazovian Province, which was in charge of organising the internal communications system. They used:

- radio stations – Scouts carried out sending and receiving exercises
- telegraphs – a flag signal system and camp telegrams were used
- field liaison – Scouts trained to pass on reports and orders between sub-camps

The efficient organisation of communications meant that information at the Jamboree could be passed on quickly and effectively, which was vital when organising large events such as competitions or shows. The system also played an important role in the event of emergencies requiring the intervention of law enforcement or medical services.

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## **Question: What shared experiences stay with us for life? What needs to happen for community to really shape us?**

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### **Daily life, trivia, memories**

#### **Arrival**

Hustle and bustle, joy and great excitement – these were the first moments of participants arriving at the Jubilee Jamboree in Spała. The station became the heart of the movement, with trains bringing Scouts from all over Poland and abroad. Unloading went smoothly – in just 15 minutes, participants were collecting their luggage and making their way to the camp. There was a buzz of conversation, singing and the sound of footsteps on the forest paths.

As Scout Janusz P. recalls, the Scouts were overwhelmed by the scale of the Jamboree. ‘As soon as I got off the train, I saw an endless crowd of Scouts and Guides. Everyone was walking in the same direction, as if we were being carried by an invisible wave. I couldn’t believe it was really happening – thousands of Scouts in one place,’ he wrote in a report in *Wieści Złotowe* (The Jamboree News). Among them were delegations of Scouts from the Czech Republic, who received an exceptionally warm welcome.

#### **Camp challenges and daily life**

The first nights in camp were a real test of Scouting skills for many. Tents were not always fully pitched and mattresses were not always available for weary hikers. The stormy weather also tested the organisation of the camps. ‘There were flashes in the sky and the tents seemed to dance in the wind. The Scouts were running around with ropes, tying up tarpaulins, but in the midst of the chaos there was a surprising calm – everyone knew what to do,’ recalled Guide Zofia M.

There was no shortage of small, amusing situations on a daily basis – one newspaper reported on a group of Scouts who had unknowingly put up a tent on a path designated for morning assemblies. In the morning they were surprised to find themselves at the centre of the festivities, much to the amusement of those gathered.

#### **Organisation of camp life**



The division of responsibilities was crucial to the smooth running of the camp. Scouts and Guides were assigned tasks according to their Province – some looked after the food stocks, others organised sports or cultural activities. Camp life was full of activity: morning assemblies, workshops, fitness activities or tidying up. Everyone contributed to building the community, and the spirit of brotherhood that prevailed ensured that, despite the hardships, everyone worked with a smile on their face.

Some of the Provinces had specific tasks – for example, the Mazovian Province was in charge of the Scout post office, and the Silesian Province organised fitness demonstrations and field games. Newspapers reported on the sporting rivalries between the camps, which generated a lot of excitement, especially among the younger Scouts.

## **Unusual events**

There was also no shortage of situations that still make us smile today. Despite the established method of packing, some Scouts arrived at the Jamboree with suitcases, much to the surprise of the organisers. ‘One of the Scouts turned up with a suitcase so heavy that we had to help him carry it. He claimed it was just personal stuff, but we suspect he had half a library in there,’ laughed Scout Kazimierz L. in an edition of *Wieści Złotowe* (The Jamboree News).

There was also an interesting traffic situation on one of the first days of the Jamboree. The streets of the camp were narrow and the crowds of participants and passing lorries required good organisation. The solution turned out simple – a rule was introduced that pedestrians should walk on the right-hand side of the road and give way to vehicles. In this way, chaos was avoided.

## **Scouting press – Jamboree chronicle**

An excellent source of information were the Jamboree newspapers published on site, which reported on events, contained anecdotes and important announcements. They allowed participants to follow daily situations and read accounts of life in the camp. Not only were they a reliable source of information, but they also provided a chronicle full of humour and amusing commentary on the everyday life of the Scouts.

*Wieści Złotowe* (The Jamboree News) also published reports from participants. ‘We would come to the editor’s office, share our experiences, and then eagerly await the next issue,’ wrote Scout Adam W. The Scouts were eager to participate in writing articles, describing daily life and interesting events, which allowed others to get a better idea of the atmosphere of the Jamboree.

## **An atmosphere of brotherhood and togetherness**



Despite the fatigue and challenges, the atmosphere at the Jamboree was amazing. There was no shortage of singing around the campfire, sharing of experiences between the teams and a sense that each participant was part of a greater whole. The Scout spirit, the willingness to serve and the desire for an unforgettable adventure brought everyone together and made the Jubilee Jamboree a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

## **Exhibitions and presentations**

The Jamboree also included presentations of each team's achievements. Exhibitions were held on Scout crafts, camp pioneering and the history of Scouting. Of particular interest was the exhibition from the Pomeranian Province, which included photos of sailing expeditions and models of boats used during summer camps.

There were also fitness demonstrations – one day the Scouts saw a drill by Scouts from abroad and a water rescue demonstration by the Sea Scouts. These events not only inspired but also highlighted the great diversity and versatility of Scouting.

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**Reflection: The Scouts of 1935 believed that a community was not a collection of people, but a relationship based on trust, work and responsibility. Today, in a world of individuals and algorithms, this approach may sound like a challenge.**

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# **Polish press coverage of the Spała Jamboree**

## **The Jamboree in the press – significance and context**

The 1935 Polish Scout Jubilee Jamboree in Spała was an event that was widely reported in the pre-war press. The major dailies devoted extensive articles to the event, emphasising its importance for the education of young people and its patriotic dimension. Press coverage focused on several key aspects: the organisation of the Jamboree, the visit of Polish President Ignacy Mościcki, the sporting and cultural events, and the public reaction.

## **Preparations for the Jamboree in the eyes of the press**



In the run-up to the Jamboree, the press reported extensively on the organisation and scale of the event. Newspapers reported on the intensive preparations to welcome nearly 23,000 Scouts and Guides, including foreign delegations. They described the construction of infrastructure, the division into sectors and the planned attractions. They highlighted the role of Scouting in developing patriotic and civic attitudes among young people. They drew attention to the organisational challenges and the prestige of the event on the international stage.

## **Reports from the Jamboree**

During the event, a number of magazines published numerous photo essays showing the daily life of the participants. Particular attention was paid to Scouting and fitness exercises, parades and patriotic ceremonies. The articles highlighted the tremendous commitment of the young people and the extraordinary discipline with which the various stages of the programme were carried out. They reported on everyday life in the camp and portrayed Scouting as a 'school of character' and a tool for shaping future national elites.

## **Visit of President Mościcki and official celebrations**

The visit of the President of the Republic of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki, who took the Jamboree under his honorary patronage, received the most press coverage. The daily *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny* and the weekly *Światowid* published detailed accounts of the official parade during which the President inspected the Scout troops. Many articles highlighted the words of Mościcki, who praised the Scouts for their dedication and expressed the hope that they would become a pillar of the future Poland. The press commented extensively on the political dimension of the visit, stressing its importance in strengthening the authority of the state and involving young people in the national idea.

## **Sporting and cultural events**

The press was also keen to report on the events surrounding the Jamboree, including photographs and reports on sports competitions, gymnastics demonstrations and concerts by Scout bands. The media also covered the Scouting exhibition, which showcased the achievements of the Scout Movement in Poland, as well as the technical achievements of the Scouts. Reports highlighted the high level of organisation and interest in the events.

## **Public perception of the Jamboree**



The press highlighted the positive public response to the Jubilee Jamboree in Spała. The articles included interviews with residents of Spała and participants in the event, who unanimously stressed its great educational and patriotic value. The daily Kurier Polski reported that the Jamboree was not only a manifestation of national unity, but also an example of perfect organisation and logistics capable of accommodating such a large number of participants.

## **The social and historical significance of the Jamboree**

The press coverage of the 1935 Polish Scout Jubilee Jamboree in Spała emphasised its great importance for the education of young people, the promotion of patriotic values and the integration of the Scouting community. The press highlighted the role of President Mościcki, the sporting and cultural dimensions of the event and its positive impact on society. Thanks to the extensive media coverage, the Jamboree became a national event, in line with the ideas of patriotic education of the time.

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## **Scout Jamboree in Spała in national press coverage**

The Jamboree in Spała was the subject of much commentary in the press at the time, including the national press. The press coverage of the Jamboree not only demonstrated its size and importance, but also reflected the deep ideological divisions in the Second Polish Republic. Looking at these reports today, we can better understand the importance attached to the education of young people at the time and the strong emotions aroused in opinion-forming circles.

Many articles in the national press raised doubts about the direction of the Scout Movement, its relationship with the Sanation state and the ideological influences that, according to national publicists, could lead to a weakening of traditional values.

Critical press articles not only challenged official triumphalist narratives, but also raised questions about the future of Scouting and its compatibility with the national vision of youth education.

## **Distrust of Scouting**

Although Scouting was seen as an important part of youth education, there was strong concern in the national press about its ideological direction. Publicists suggested that Scouting was following too closely foreign,



particularly English, models, which they felt could lead to a weakening of the national character of youth education. The Scout Movement's international contacts were also criticised, as they could weaken the sense of national pride and threaten the ideological sovereignty of young Poles.

## **Allegations of Masonic and liberal influence**

One of the most serious accusations levelled against the Scouts presented in the widely read daily *Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy* (an offshoot of *Gazeta Warszawska*) was the suspicion that Masonic and liberal influences were infiltrating its structures. The newspaper's editors feared that the Scout Movement was becoming an instrument for educating young people according to foreign models that were incompatible with Catholic and national traditions. There was also criticism of the introduction of educational methods which, according to the authors, were not conducive to the formation of strong and ideologically conscious Poles, but promoted an excessively benevolent and universalist vision of patriotism.

## **Political and ideological context**

The Second Polish Republic was a country with strong ideological divisions, and the Scout Movement, as a mass youth movement, was not immune. In the 1930s, the authoritarian model of the Sanation government became increasingly entrenched, and this aroused suspicion in nationalist circles. Nationalists saw Scouting as a potential tool for political indoctrination and criticised the movement for being heavily influenced by the state. They feared that instead of educating young people in the spirit of independence and national radicalism, Scouting was becoming a mechanism subservient to the official Sanation ideology.

## **Jamboree as a propaganda element**

Press reports highlighted the propaganda dimension of the Spala Jamboree. Ceremonies emphasising the unity of the nation, obedience to the authorities and the willingness of young people to serve the state were described. The national press was cautious, pointing to the danger of Scouting becoming part of the official state narrative rather than remaining an independent educational movement. There was also no shortage of criticism of the organisation of the Jamboree itself, accusing it of being too centralised and artificially pompous.

## **Dispute over the future of Scouting**



The debate about Scouting in the pages of the Polish interwar press was part of a wider debate about the direction in which the education of young people in the Second Polish Republic should go. Representatives of the national movement were concerned that Scouting in its current form did not meet the expectations of educating the nation's future elites. It was criticised for not having an explicit national ideology and for being open to international influence.

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## Conclusion: heritage and present

The 1935 Jamboree in Spała was the culmination of a quarter of a century of Scouting activity, but also a symbolic confirmation that young people educated in the spirit of service and brotherhood could play an important role in shaping civil society. It was also an opportunity to learn independence, responsibility and cooperation in a practical way. Scouts had the chance to develop their skills, gain new experiences and participate in a large community of young people sharing the same values.

Today, 90 years later, we ask: are the ideals of that generation still relevant? Does the modern state and society recognise the educational and community potential of the Scout Movement? Can Scouting be an answer to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – loneliness, atomisation, identity crises?

The *March to Spała* exhibition is not only a reminder of a glorious past. It is also an invitation to talk about the future. Scouting, although born in a very different reality, still offers young people a space for action, growth, responsibility and cooperation. It is a reminder that service – to country, to neighbour, to nature – can be a way of life, not just a slogan.

At a time when it is increasingly difficult to build sustainable communities, Scouting remains one of the few environments where young people learn through experience – not from screens, but in the real world, in contact with others and with nature. It is worth asking ourselves whether we would be prepared today, as we were 90 years ago, to entrust Scouts with the task of building a national community. Or are they, now more than ever, the last guardians of that community?

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**Question: What shared experiences stay with us for life? What needs to happen for community to really shape us?**