



A Message from the First Lady of the Republic of Poland, Mrs. Anna Komorowska

Warsaw March 1, 2012

To Mr. Jerry Nussbaum, Chairman of the
Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

Ms. Malgorzata Burczycka, Secretary to the Board
of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

Dear Sir and Madam,

I would like to thank you for your letter informing
me of the upcoming cultural events dedicated to the
Year of Janusz Korczak, to be held in Vancouver,
British Columbia, Canada.

I was happy to learn that the Janusz Korczak
Association of Canada is so deeply involved in the
organization of various educational and cultural
events related to the Year of Janusz Korczak. This
will certainly help to promote Korczak's legacy and
disseminate knowledge about this pedagogue, educa-

tor, and doctor with a great heart – a man who “felt
like a child and thought like the Old Doctor.”

The idea of respect for a child, of their right to be
who they are and for their dignity is especially close
to me; therefore I have enthusiastically accepted the
position of Chairwoman of the Honourary Com-
mittee of the Celebration of the Year of Janusz
Korczak in Poland. I believe that we should always
remember that children are people and it is our
responsibility to help make their lives full of joy and
happiness.

I am sending my congratulations to all the Korcza-
kians in Canada. I greatly appreciate your efforts in
promoting the legacy of Janusz Korczak.

I wish you lots of success in your educational and
cultural activities, this year and in the years to come.

Anna Komorowska

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gratitude to our sponsors for their
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Unveiling Ceremony of the Bronze-Relief *Janusz Korczak and His Children* at the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia



Speech delivered by Dr. Mark Edwards, Assistant Dean, Professional Development and Community Engagement, of Faculty of Education, UBC

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As an Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Education at University of British Columbia I bring greetings from Dean Blye Frank and his regrets that he could not be at this ceremony.

It is an honour for me to meet you here, on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam People and to welcome you to the Faculty of Education.

Amongst us, to witness and share this important event, I wish to acknowledge the gracious presence of Mr. Krzysztof Czapla, Consul

General of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Kazimierz Brusilo, Chair of the Polish Canadian Congress, district British Columbia, Ms. Nina Krieger, Executive Director of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Dr. Anna Kinder, Vice Provost of the University of British Columbia, and Mr. Jerry Nussbaum, Chairman of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of the many people who made this gift of the Korczak bronze relief and this occasion possible. Particularly, Mr. Rona, the artist, the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, the Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research, and the Faculty of Education Development office. Our Thanks!

Many of you know the story and work of Janusz Korczak. Until this week, I did not. In the field of virtue ethics, the argument goes that a person knows what is good and how to be good by looking to those who are exemplars of the virtues we aspire to.

My journey with Janusz Korczak this week has led me to understand how profoundly appropriate it is for the gift of this bronze-relief to take this iconic location at the entrance of our Teacher Education office.

Janusz Korczak exemplifies values we seek to inspire in every educator who participates in this Faculty. You will learn much more of his life today, but I would bring your attention to these virtues: his love of children, his lifelong commitment to the powerless, his intelligent and creative engagement with life as a writer, pediatrician, and educator, his commitment to research and improving knowledge and under-



From left to right: Jerry Nussbaum, Chairman of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, Nina Krieger, Executive Director of Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Dr. Mark Edwards, Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Education, Krzysztof Czaplą, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Vancouver

standing, his commitment to practice – participating in and making a difference in the lives of children and community with his ideas, and his understanding that serving children called for giving one's life fully and that such a calling was worthy of one's life.

His death provokes us to pay attention.

The image of Dr. Korczak leading his 200 orphan children to the train of the Treblinka death camp catches one's heart.

How could such an atrocity occur? How could our fellow human beings watch this? Stand by? Do this?

His death, and the death of the orphans he cared for, reveal starkly the horror of the Holocaust. This Faculty strives to bring social justice into this world. We seek to educate in a way

that rids the world of racism and discrimination. The death of Janusz Korczak reminds us of the fundamental importance of this commitment, of this work, and holds us accountable.

It is my sincere hope that every student, teacher, faculty member, and staff member will take several minutes in quiet reflection with this relief. It will inspire them. It will deepen their resolve to do good work. And it will remind them that they are here to make the world a better place.

With this gift, I believe we will honour the life of Janusz Korczak.

On behalf of the Faculty of Education, thank you Mr. Nussbaum and all the members of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. ■



Speech delivered by Mr. Jerry Nussbaum, the Chairman of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the ceremony of unveiling the bronze-relief of Janusz Korczak and his children.

The relief was created by a renowned Polish artist Mr. Marek Rona. With a great sorrow I must tell you that Mr. Rona passed away shortly after completing this project and attending the unveiling ceremony of a sister bronze-relief at the Poznan Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland, which was also a part of a conference dedicated to Janusz Korczak. That conference was a common initiative of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and the Department of Education of the Poznan University. The conference, apart from unveiling the bronze-relief, involved also a presentation of a book written by Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, a Board member of our Association, and published in cooperation with the Poznan University.

The placing the relief in such a prestigious place as the Faculty of Education at UBC to

honour Korczak as an educator, is an excellent choice. I would like to thank the Faculty of Education and especially Dean B. Frank for recognizing the symbolism of this act.

Some of the guests invited to the unveiling ceremony and the conference were unable to attend. Instead we received several congratulatory letters wishing us all a productive and successful meeting: from the First Lady of Poland, Anna Komorowska – the Chair of the Honourary Committee of the Celebration of the Janusz Korczak Year, and Mr. Marek Michalak, the Ombudsman for Children's Rights in Poland, as well as Prof. Bronislaw Marciniak, the Chancellor of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. Prof. Marciniak wrote in his letter, "I hope this event is a step towards cooperation between the University of BC and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland." We also received warm greetings from the former pupils of Janusz Korczak from Israel.

I would like to invite you to the unveiling of the bronze-relief. ■



2012 The Year of Janusz Korczak
Janusz Korczak
His Legacy and Children's Rights

Conference
 Friday, November 2, 2012
 10:15 am - 4:30 pm
 St. John's College UBC

Unveiling of the Bronze Relief
 9:30 am
 Scarfe Bldg. Lobby

VANCOUVER, B.C. CANADA

Organized by the UBC Faculty of Education and
 The Janusz Korczak Association of Canada
 Sponsored by the Consulate General of the
 Republic of Poland and the Vancouver
 Holocaust Education Centre

www.januszkorczak.ca/news.html

Designed by Anna Gelbart

The Conference was organized by the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada in cooperation with the Faculty of Education of the University of British Columbia with participation of the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland.

The Conference took place at the Fairmont Social Lounge, St. John's College, UBC on November 2, 2012.

The participants of the Conference were cordially greeted by Dr. Henry Yu, Principal of St. John's College.

Conference

Janusz Korczak: His Legacy and Children's Rights

*Opening remarks by Mr. Krzysztof Czaplak,
Consul General of the Republic of Poland
in Vancouver*

This year 70 years have passed since the death of Janusz Korczak in the Nazi extermination camp of Treblinka. This year also 100 years have passed since the opening of the Home for Orphans at Krochmalna Street in Warsaw – a unique educational institution for Jewish

children, in which Janusz Korczak built and developed ideas that went beyond teaching and educational standards of care of his time.

Korczak belonged to great intellectual and moral authorities of the 20th century and he still teaches us today. He tells us how to love a child, what is the autonomy and rights of a child. He shows us how to strive for tolerance, dialogue, self-government and democracy in education. These are the tasks that the 21st century inherited after him.

Korczak spirit survives in all he achieved during a lifetime devoted to defending children.

Though he couldn't save his orphans from the horror of the Holocaust, his insistence that children have the right to be loved, educated, and protected has continued to inspire people all over the world.

In a resolution of the Polish Parliament the year of 2012 has been declared the Year of Janusz Korczak. It is my honour to read this resolution here in Vancouver, more than ten thousand miles away from Poland, where the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada has developed the series of international projects on this occasion, with unveiling of identical bronze-reliefs *Janusz Korczak and His Children*, created by Polish artist Marek Rona, at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan and the University of British Columbia as a symbol of the future co-operation between the UBC Faculty of Education and Poznan Faculty of Educational Studies.





*Introduction by Jerry Nussbaum,
the Chairman of the Janusz Korczak
Association of Canada*

Distinguished guests,

Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Krzysztof Czaplą, the Chairman of the Polish Canadian Congress, Mr. Kazimierz Brusilo, the Executive Director of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Ms. Nina Krieger, Vice Provost of UBC, Dr. Anna Kindler, Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Blye Frank, the Principal of St. John's College, Dr. Henry Yu, Faculty members, students, Korczakians and all our dear guests.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you at this historic event, the first Canadian Conference dedicated to Janusz Korczak, the great humanitarian and pioneer of children's rights.

This Conference would not be possible if it were not for the sponsorship and encouragement by the Consulate of the Republic of Poland and the Consul, Mr. Krzysztof Czaplą.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Vice Provost, Dr. Anna Kindler for her vision to forge ties between the Korczak Association and the Faculty of Education to explore the pedagogy of Janusz Korczak.

I would like to thank the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Blye Frank for bringing aboard many members of his Faculty, who have worked relentlessly during the long process of organizing the Conference.

Thank you to the steering committee members, Dr. Marilyn Chapman, Dr. Theresa Rogers, Dr. Daniel Vokey, Dr. Hillel Goelman, Ms. Stephanie Forgacs, Ms. Iris Berger and Ms. Katie Blyth from the Faculty of Education and Ms. Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, an author, and Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo from the Janusz Korczak Association.

Thank you to our presenters and panelists.

Thank you to Ms. Nina Krieger and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre for support and for allowing us to present the Korczak Exhibit to the members of UBC community.

We were extremely fortunate to receive generous donations from individual supporters. Some of you, like Paul Heller, Robert Waisman and Yosef Wosk, have supported us for many, many years. My profound thanks go also to many others – please take a moment to peruse the names of the donors in the Conference program.

I would like to thank Dr. Zenon Cieslak and Dr. Joanna Rotecka for their continuous and consistent efforts that resulted in granting Janusz Korczak, a pediatrician by profession, an honorary membership in the BC Pediatric Association. I would like to thank other members of the medical community for the financial support and for promoting the image of Janusz Korczak within the medical community. My thanks go



to Drs. Andrzej Buczkowski, Andrew Ignaszewski, Samuel Lichtenstein, Anna Zajackowska-Kielska, Siemion Altman, Andrew Jakubowski, George Medvedev, and Maria Bleszynska.

My deep gratitude also goes to all the hard working Korczakian Family.

The Janusz Korczak Association of Canada was created over 10 years ago and was registered as a charitable organization in 2002. The members of the Board have been working very hard since the inception of the organization to promote the legacy of Janusz Korczak in Canada and to support underprivileged children. The Association has completed many projects, ranging from organizing an international exhibition of children's drawings, through material support for several orphanages in Poland, many public lectures presented by our guests from Canada, Europe and the United States. The Association publishes an extensive periodical, the only Korczak related English language publication in the world. Our latest projects include several publications such as the book *May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil* by one of our Board members, Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, the Bibliography of Korczak's Works (English Sources) edited by Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and Dr. Galina Sanaeva, book of poetry by Richard Mirabel (selected and edited by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo), who was a contributor and secretary to the editorial staff of Korczak's children newspaper, *The Little Review*.

All the work of the Association has been accomplished by our dedicated members of the Board: Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, Malgorzata Burczykca, Gina Dimant, Anna Gelbart, Iwona Haskins, Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, Galina Sanaeva, and Andrzej Wroblewski.

At this time I would like to take the opportunity to invite all of you who are not yet the members of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada to join us.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about my personal encounters with the legacy of Janusz Korczak. As you will no doubt hear today, Janusz Korczak's talents and achievements were incredibly broad and multifaceted. He wrote academic works, novels, and children's stories that are beloved to this day; he was a physician, an educator, and a children's advocate.

But, even more remarkably, he was able to put his many ideas into practice. Through the Janusz Korczak Association I have had the privilege of meeting some of the people whose lives Korczak touched, and it is truly amazing what a profound effect he had on them.

Many of them, like Bolek Drukier, who worked as Korczak's assistant in the Home for Orphans, have given me a deeper understanding of Korczak's ideas. In Vancouver, I met Dr. Ludwik Mirabel and Richard Mirabel, who knew the Old Doctor through their work on *Little Review*. But it wasn't until last summer, during a visit to Israel that I truly appreciated what Korczak really meant to his pupils.

There I met two men in their nineties, who clearly fulfilled their life's ambitions and were still working despite their advanced age. To this day, their lives were influenced by the spirit and memory of their teacher. Shlomo Nadel, who is now 92 years old, is a photographer by profession. On his bedroom wall hangs a single portrait – the portrait of Korczak. Yitzhak Belfer, now 94, is a sculptor. His house is filled with images of the Old Doctor and his children always showing him embracing his pupils, shielding them from harm and injustice.

Now I am passing the proceedings on to the Master of Ceremonies and the panel moderator, Dr. Jay Eidelman.

I hope that our Conference will inspire and expand the interest in Korczak's legacy. ■



Who was Korczak?



Presented by Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, an author of poetry and prose, a Board member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

Who was Korczak? The man who wore many hats and juggled a number of personalities with grace, humility and courage, the doctor, the caregiver, the champion of children's rights, the broadcaster, the writer, and a hero.

I will try to introduce and illuminate the background against which this great man lived, changed, and grew in stature.

Some claim that there were two Korczaks: the young utopian as pictured in his book called *King Matt I* who dreamed of a better world for children. The other was known as the sceptical Old Doctor who took care of orphans. And yet there is also a third and fourth Korczak, the Pole and Henryk Goldszmit, the Jew.

I will go with the name Henryk for a while until he becomes Janusz Korczak. Henryk Goldszmit was born on July 22nd but the exact year is not known. It was either 1878 or 1879. His father, a prominent lawyer in Warsaw, delayed registering his birth. His mother called it "gross negligence."

The members of Henryk's family were well off, educated and assimilated Jews who practiced the Jewish religion as an ethic rather than a ritual. Henryk had an overprotective mother and a father who was given to frequent moods, breakdowns and eventual loss of mind. He called his son a clod, an idiot and other unkind names. At the age of 5, Henryk told his granny whom he loved because she understood him, of his scheme to remake the world.

Henryk Goldszmit would soon feel the split in himself between being a Pole and a Jew. In Poland of those times you could describe yourself as a Pole if you were a Polish Catholic. But if you were a Polish Jew, you were considered a Jew and not a Pole.

One of the first moments when he deeply felt this was at his beloved canary's funeral. Betty Jean Lifton, the author of the book *The King of Children* (1988) writes, "The canary had been the boy's closest friend caged in, as neither was allowed to fly free. When he wanted to bury the bird under the chestnut tree in the courtyard the maid told him you can't do that because a bird is lowly, lower than man. But he buried the bird anyway and constructed a cross on his grave. So then the janitor's boy came along and objected to the cross saying that the canary was Jewish and of course so was Henryk. It was a moment of revelation, the young boy never forgot."

At that time Poland was under the rule of the Russian Tsar and in Polish schools Polish language and history were forbidden. As a child enclosed by the old fashioned parental system that kept him isolated from other children, Henryk was tutored at home till he was 7. When he went to school, he started observing the way children were treated by adults. Students were often beaten and publicly humiliated, and so

Henryk saw right then and there, that children were not respected. He wanted to help the poor, the hungry and the dirty kids that his mother would not allow him to play with.

Later on his father, Jozef Goldszmit became mentally unstable and had to enter an asylum. After his father's death Henryk's mother was forced to run their home as a boarding house to pay the medical bills.

In order to help his family, Henryk, a young teenager, started tutoring the children of wealthy families. He felt humiliated when they treated him like a servant, addressing him in a language used for servants and ordering him to enter the home through the back door. Henryk was a creative tutor and the experience inspired his first article called *The Gordian Knot* published in a local magazine, in which he asked whether the day will come when mothers stop thinking about clothes and playing cards and begin raising and educating their children whom they had turned over to governesses and tutors. He was already attacking the following issues: How to motivate parents to take a leading role in shaping their children's mind and character; How to develop a pedagogic strategy that would seize the imagination of adults and help children to "see", "understand" and "love" as well as "to read and write." The other articles followed.

Henryk also wrote a journal, which he would later rework into a book called *Confessions of a Butterfly*. He wrote, "To wound a poet's heart is like treading on a butterfly."

In 1895 he decided, "I will not be a writer, but a doctor. Literature is just words, while medicine is deeds."

Two years later, Henryk, an intense medical student, seemed to have forgotten his determination to abandon writing. Hearing of a playwriting contest under the patronage of the famous pia-



Henryk Goldszmit (Janusz Korczak)
as a 10-year-old boy. 1888

nist Ignacy Paderewski, he submitted a four act play entitled *Which Way?* that won an honourable mention. It bore the pseudonym of Janusz Korczak. It is said that Henryk learned at the last moment that he needed a pen name for the contest so he hastily took it from the first book he saw on his desk, *The Story of Janasz Korczak and the Beautiful Swordbearer's Daughter* written by Poland's most prolific historical novelist Jozef Ignacy Kraszewski. It is thought that Henryk was inspired by the emotional inscription in the book: "Take me under your wing, Master, like an eagle protecting a fledgling bird!" Also, the printer had made a mistake and printed *Janusz* instead of *Janasz* and that is how Janusz Korczak came to be. But he didn't use the name Korczak for a long time. He used fragments of his two selves by signing Hen., Ryk., Hen. Ryk., Janusz or just K. as if he needed time to fully integrate his new identity. Only his medical articles in professional journals were consistently signed Henryk Goldszmit.



Janusz Korczak in his University uniform. C. 1904

There were few who knew that Henryk Goldszmit was leading a double life. On the one hand, he was the medical student, dutifully living at home with his mother, on the other hand, he was his other self, Janusz Korczak, the tortured writer who prowled the roughest slums of the city alone or with a friend. There, he said, he felt that his soul was being liberated.

He wrote a book called *Child of the Drawing Room*, a story about awakening. This book was serialized in a magazine called *Voice* (1904 – 1905) and signed by Janusz Korczak, while Henryk Goldszmit began a residency at the Jewish Children's Hospital.

In the *Child of the Drawing Room* Korczak expresses his frustration with the limitations imposed on him by his parents and others around him when he was a child. The character is Janek, who realizes that he has slept through his life trying to conform to his parent's idea of what he should be. So Janek leaves home for a poor district and is drawn to an area of the neglected and abused children. He gives them candy and medicine and he hones his belief in human kindness. He expresses his awakening by acquiring new and invisible powers that from then on will illuminate his way. He is transformed from a self-absorbed writer into a

man of spiritual faith who is responsible for his fellow human beings.

Henryk received his medical diploma in 1905, and was soon conscripted as a doctor into the Tsar's Imperial Army to serve in the Russo-Japanese war. The young doctor learned that "war helps you see the illnesses of the body."

He then offered his services to a summer camp, which enabled him to work with poor Jewish children. There, he observed how they behaved and started formulating ideas on how to treat and understand these children. Soon after that he explored counseling at a camp of Polish children. When asked for a comparison, he replied that one should look for similarities not differences in children and that both camps were the same in the area of emotion and rationality of the kids.

Korczak wrote from experience and channeled his thoughts and feelings into stories, which characterized and symbolized his concerns with children and society and how one reflects upon the other. He is known to have said, "that the health of a society or a country can be gauged by the well being of its children."

In 1910, the Warsaw society learned with some surprise that Janusz Korczak intended to give up a successful medical practice to become a director of an orphanage for Jewish children. The orphanage would give him his much-awaited chance to put his pedagogical ideas into practice. It opened on October 1912 on 92 Krochmalna Street in Warsaw.

When interviewed, Korczak said, "The reason I became an educator was that I always felt best when I was among children." Later he wrote, "The road I have chosen toward my goal is neither the shortest nor the most convenient. But it is the best for me – because it is my own." It was in this *Dom Sierot* or The Home for Or-

phans that Korczak realized his famous concept of the Children's Republic.

The First World War broke out and Korczak was assigned to a divisional field hospital on the Eastern front. While camping overnight in a deserted village he was riveted by the sight of an old Jew groping his way with a stick. The old Jew had decided not to leave with the convoy of horse and wagons but insisted on remaining behind to watch over the synagogue and the cemetery. Twenty-five years later, when Korczak chose to remain in the Warsaw Ghetto with his orphans, he would liken himself to the old Jew.

Yet he tried to see everything in universal terms. "It is not only Jews who suffer," he wrote, "all the world is submerged in blood and fire and mourning and suffering does not make men noble, not even the Jews."

Perhaps, to keep himself from falling into despair at the field hospital being moved back and forth with the troops across the battlefields of Eastern Europe, Korczak began writing a book, which would become *How to Love a Child*. It was originally to be a handbook for parents and children which grew to hundreds of pages. The main thesis of the book is that one cannot possibly love a child, one's own or another's, until one sees him or her as a separate being with right to grow into the person he or she were meant to be. What's more important, "you cannot even understand a child," he wrote, "until you achieve self-knowledge: You yourself are the child whom you must learn to know, rear, and above all, enlighten." In this book he wrote, "A hundred children, a hundred individuals who are people – not people-to be, not people of tomorrow, but people now, right now, – today."

Finally, in 1918 the war ended and Poland achieved independence. On November 11th of that year the children of the Home for Orphans hung out the red and white Polish flags in honour of the independence. Korczak returned



The early edition of Korczak's book *How to Love a Child*. 1929

to his children. He wrote, "Poland is not just the fields, the coal mines, the forests and munitions factories, it is above all – her children."

He began to write a column for children *In the Sunshine* magazine. He wanted them to understand what independence meant and about other issues it brought about. It was the first column of its kind meant just for children.

In 1919, an orphanage for the Polish (non-Jewish) children in a small town of Pruszkow was set up. It was to be named Our Home.

Korczak is now responsible for the medical and educational management both a Jewish and a Polish orphanage, and herein we discover how his dual image of a Pole and a Jew found its expression. He became the bridge between the Poles and Jews.

In 1920, Korczak was again drafted, this time into a Russo-Polish war until finally at its end, he returned to his orphans once again. It was around this time that he wrote *King Matt I*. He wrote in a garret on Krochmalna street, a



children's story about a boy king who dreams of creating a perfect society with just laws for both children and adults.

In 1926, Korczak started a new project called *The Little Review*. That was the paper that, as he said, was to defend children. It was written by children for children. Young reporters were encouraged to write about their own experiences. Korczak wanted to give the children a healthy outlet for expressing problems bottled up inside them.

In 1933, Korczak was awarded the Silver Cross of the *Polonia Restituta*, a decoration given to very few for their contribution to Polish society. Soon, he was offered his own radio show and was told to use a pseudonym. "Radio will never replace a book," he said, "but it is a new language into the home, the intimate areas of life and into the human heart." Because the higher officials didn't want to be accused of allowing a Jewish educator to shape the minds of Polish children and adults, he agreed to go by the name of the Old Doctor, having said that it was better to influence people anonymously, than not at all. The Old Doctor did a "loneliness series" on the radio among many others. "When does loneliness begin?" the Old Doctor asks an ancient linden tree which he recognizes as his double. "With the first gray hair? The first extracted tooth, which will never grow back again? With your first grandchild? Who are you Pilgrim, a wanderer, or a castaway? While you lived did you observe languidly as life flowed by, did you steer the course, or were you just carried along?"

Korczak asks the very questions he had been asking himself all his life, and the lonely people revealed themselves in the thousands of letters to the Old Doctor.

On November 4th 1937, the Polish Academy of literature awarded Janusz Korczak The Golden Laurel for outstanding literary achievement. Finally Korczak embarked on his longed awaited trip to Palestine.



Janusz Korczak. 1933

"One needs to absorb an experience until he understands it not only with his head but with his heart," Korczak told an audience at the Institute of Judaic Studies on his Palestine trip. He had become known for his great lectures. But when he returned to Warsaw, he was accused of being a Zionist and was then asked how come he was allowed to educate Polish children? He lost his radio program, and his consulting post at the juvenile court.

Nevertheless Korczak continued his fight for the rights of children and penned a Charter of their rights as he thought it should be written. This came to fruition many years after his death, first by UNESCO then much later by The United Nations.

Korczak also wrote in *The Child's Right to Respect*. "There are many terrible things in this world, but the worst is when a child is afraid of his father, mother or teacher."

Janusz Korczak witnessed and ultimately fell victim to some of the brutal events of the first half of the 20th century. He became aware at an



early age of how profoundly war and social evils had afflicted children. "It was the children," he said, "who had to carry the burden of history's atrocities."

And so it came to pass in the final chapter of his life, that the WWII began with an attack on Poland. This led to the construction of the Ghetto.

In 1940, Korczak was forced to move his Jewish Orphanage to the Warsaw ghetto and begin the heroic struggle to keep his two hundred orphans clothed, fed, and above all, alive. By this time Janusz Korczak had become tired and in poor health. But still he trudged through the shabby and dangerous ghetto streets gathering, in this time of deprivation, whatever food and medicine he could find for his children.

My father, who knew Janusz Korczak well in the Ghetto, helped him with whatever supplies he could find. Father told me many stories about this caregiver of children and about his struggle. I grew up thinking of Korczak as my hero. In his last entry in *The Ghetto Diary*, on August 4th 1942, Korczak wrote, "I am watering flowers. My bald head in the window. What a splendid target. He [a German soldier] has a rifle. Why is he standing and looking on so calmly?"

The next day, on August 5th 1942 the Nazis came for the children of the orphanage. Janusz Korczak was offered a reprieve as he had many friends among the Poles. But he said, "I hate desertion, and besides my children need me."

No survivor who was there at the time can forget the long procession of Korczak, his assistants and the children to the dreaded Umschlagplatz, a gathering place where the cattle cars stood waiting for Jews to be transported to the Treblinka concentration camp.

He marched holding one child in his arms and one by the hand, he marched through the streets



*The last picture of Janusz Korczak.
The Warsaw Ghetto, 1941*

of the Warsaw Ghetto to the trains, which took Korczak and the children to the death camp where, it is said, that they all perished by gas the very next day on August 6th.

But his legend lives on through his work and through those who remember and those who work with children.

I wrote the following in a poem dedicated to Janusz Korczak, titled *The Gardener of Children*:

He marched with them
Beneath the stars of Bethlehem and David
Warming them with his heart's flame –
A flame that still burns among the ashes.

Credits

*This talk is based on Betty Jean Lifton's biography of Korczak – **The King of Children**; Jadwiga Binczycka's **Meeting Korczak**; and Korczak's **The Ghetto Diary** as well as some of my own experiences and observations.*



Korczak's Home for Orphans as the Children's Republic



Presented by Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, an independent scholar, a member of the Board of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

The Home for Orphans, under the management of Janusz Korczak, was opened in Warsaw in 1912.

Now picture this: Eastern Europe, Poland, which at that time did not exist as an independent country, and Warsaw as a part of the Russian Empire. A hundred years ago. Definitely too distant, too far from modern Canada. The world is small though, and things are somehow attached to each other, even if we don't connect them for the time being. Here is a proof of it: The history of the Home for Orphans is linked, in a pretty obvious way, to today's Vancouver life. Here, in town, live direct descendants of one of the founders of the

Home, a popular physician of Warsaw – Isaac Eliasberg, famous as a doctor who treated poor patients free of charge. His grandchildren: Jane and George Heyman, in turn, are known in Vancouver as those for whom social good is more important than their personal well-being – exactly as it was for their grandfather many years ago. The essential values remain in the family and the family's past naturally becomes its present.

Let me tell you briefly how the establishment, that is now recognized throughout the world as Janusz Korczak's Home for Orphans, began.

A widow of Dr. Isaac Eliasberg, Ms. Stella Eliasberg who after WWII used to live in Vancouver, wrote in her memoirs, "A charitable Association *Help the Orphans* was founded in Warsaw in 1908. The Association aimed to assist Jewish orphans and children from the poorest families." That was a necessity – social differences among the Jewish population in Poland were extreme and poverty of the poor was just indescribable.

Isaac Eliasberg was elected the Chairman of this Association in 1910 and remained as one until his death in 1929. His devotion to the orphan's cause was absolute and for his determination to collect means to support children from impoverished families he was called in the city an Almsgiver.

The Eliasbergs personally knew Dr. Goldszmit (that was the real name of Janusz Korczak) – as a young brilliant physician and by the time an author of quite a few articles on children's issues. They convinced Korczak to join the



*Isaac Eliasberg. 1902.
Courtesy of Jane Heyman*



*Janusz Korczak, Isaac Eliasberg,
Stefania Wilczynska. 1914*

Association. It was easy to talk him into, and he became a member of Association's Board of Directors in 1908.

At that time the idea to construct a new Home for Orphans was born, not just another appalling shelter but spacious and bright, with modern facilities such as running water, cold and warm, sewerage system etc. As soon as necessary amount of money was collected, the construction work started. Dr. Eliasberg and Dr. Goldszmit participated in the project from the very beginning. They took care of the functionality of the building and supervised all works regularly visiting the construction site.

The building was completed in October 1912. Just a pearl in one of the most miserable streets of Warsaw. The main thing though was yet to be done: to organize in the building not only a

comfortable but good life for children, to fill it with joy and peace, and to make children, together with the adults in charge, masters of their Home.

It is not easy now, after so many years, to accurately reconstruct how children lived at the Home. Most of its documentation perished in the flames of WWII, many of those who would have been able to tell us about it at first hand had perished. So for that we have to piece together information from various sources: Korczak's writings, articles written by his colleagues, some reports of the *Help the Orphans* Association and other archival records, and – above all, recollections of the Home's former pupils who managed to survive the war either in Poland or – mainly – abroad.

There is one more source of information that I would like to mention: The artifacts – Com-



The Home for Orphans

memorative Postcards and photographs handwritten by Korczak on the back side, which the children would receive at the Home as a sign of their achievements or, as Korczak put it, “as a sign of child’s victory on him/herself.”

Here again a Canadian digression needs to be done.

These artifacts have a historical value. Hundreds if not thousands of them were given out at the Home during the years of its existence but just a few of them managed to get through the Holocaust. The largest and the most comprehensive artifacts collection was preserved – believe it or not – in Canada. They were saved thanks to the fact that a pupil from the Orphanage by name Leon Gluzman, who had lived there from 1923 to 1930, when emigrated from Poland to Canada in 1930 (on his own as a 14 year-old-boy, with 10 dollars in his pocket and a tiny English-Polish dictionary) took them with him as a dearest treasure of his childhood.

These artifacts, iconic in Korczak’s pedagogy, reveal specific character of his teaching: The techniques of education applied at the Home appeared simple but results were extremely effective.

All above mentioned materials: Korczak’s own works, memoirs and artifacts clearly show that the life at the Home for Orphans was organized in a democratic fashion.

What was the grounds for that?

First of all, it was Korczak’s understanding of a child. Unlike many other children’s authors and pedagogues he did not just describe children looking from one – adults’ – side. Korczak possessed a unique gift to see the world from the child’s perspective. Thus, his goal was not only to support children’s development but to grant them the equal rights with adults including two fundamental ones that had been formulated by him: the right to be who they are and the right to be respected.

That was what Korczak set in train and realised at the Home for Orphans.

Korczak was the one who came up with ideas how to run the Home. Then the word was wrought into deed but never became dogma. In practice, corrections were made to the rules, certain changes were introduced, and some of suggestions that had not been worked out were rejected. This is usually especially difficult step for adults who don’t like to say good-bye to their ideas conceived in the quietness of their cosy study room but cannot stand when ‘attacked’ by real children.

How then were Korczak’s ideas put into practice?

At the Home self-government was in progress. The Parliament (20 members out of 100 residents and few adults) issued decisions vital for the Home’s life. Ideas proposed by Korczak were given to discussion and then affirmed by the Home’s Parliament. Engaged into the legislative process, the children became familiar with the law, learnt to reason and respect it. Self-government was one of the educational forms for

The Parliament members, the Home for Orphans. 1928. Leon Gluzman Collection. The Ghetto Fighters' Museum, Israel



children so as to develop a sense of belonging to their small community and society at large.

Another crucial part of self-government was the Court of Peers. Korczak explained the system of its rules, "Clauses of our codex do not include corporal punishment, do not lock anyone in dark cells, and do not deprive anyone of food or the opportunity to play. The clauses of our codex of house rules are only meant to be a warning and a reminder. They say – *You did something wrong, very wrong. Try and do better.* If someone breaks the rules, it is best to *forgive* him." Paradoxically, forgiveness was the most common 'punishment' because it induced the children to think over – without any anger and fear – what had been done wrong. Korczak continued, "The Court can become the nucleus of granting children equal rights, introduces this into the constitution and ensures a declaration of equal rights for children. A child has the right to be treated seriously, to be treated with justice. Up to now, all this was dependent on the good will and good or bad mood of the carer concerned. A child did not have the right of protest. It is high time to end the practice of despotism towards children."

More importantly, pupils as well as adult staff were brought before the Court as they were considered 'citizens' of equal rights. Korczak himself was sued not only once. A few times he brought charges against himself, for example of throwing a boy out of the dormitory or suspecting a girl of pilfering. In each case, he submitted an extensive written statement. Korczak declared later that these few cases had been the nub of his training "as a new '*constitutional*' teacher who avoids maltreatment of children not because he likes them, but because there is a certain institution which protects them against the teacher's lawlessness."

Democracy at children's institution implemented to such an extent amazes us today. Even more so it amazed professionals in the 1920s and 1930s. Jean Piaget, that time the top authority in child's psychology in Europe, came to Poland to see a 'magician' from Warsaw with his own eyes. Being greatly impressed, he summed up his visit in the article *Which Direction Does the Education Go* in 1932: "A director of the Home for Orphans is an extraordinary human being, courageous enough to trust children to the degree that he literally gave them



the right to solve even the most complicated matters of discipline and set for them the most responsible tasks. Two things amazed me most of all: education of newcomers by experienced residents of the Home and how the Court of Peers was organized, which was fully managed by children. [...] Reports of the Court sessions are later published in the newsletter. Psychologists will hardly find something more interesting than this document [...]: humanism, understanding, and tactful assessments of the young people given by the other young people [...] That was extremely touching and promising experience [...]", concluded Jean Piaget.

Another form of democracy in progress was the so-called plebiscite. Once in a while children presented their opinion about a particular pupil to the Parliament, then the Parliament counted the number of votes. That allowed the children to see themselves reflected in the eyes of the others. On the last farewell card given to the children when they were leaving the Home the plebiscite results were added for children not to forget that other people around them look at them, watch them and praise or don't praise their behaviour.

At the Home the newspaper would be issued. It was a real chronicle of the Home's life. Moreover, the newspaper provided educators with feed back from those in their care.

Let me add a few words on economic grounds of running the Home. The Home lived on donations. But without self-help it could not have kept afloat. Everyone contributed to the running of it through the so-called rotas – without exception. However, apart from those rotas that were a responsibility for everyone, the children would choose their own field of work. After the first year of the Home, in 1913, Korczak described the challenge undertaken as follows, "The transformation of a hundred children into a hundred workers, is a task that is

unbelievably difficult." In 1920 he summed up: "This year has finished as a triumph for us. Four staff members – for a hundred children. The master, worker and director of the Home has become – the child."

Being a necessity, the rotas were one of the means of preparing the pupils for hard work, responsibility, and independence.

For the most responsible rotas children received a small remuneration – for money management was a part of education. But what was done in this respect for the youngest ones who could not cope with complicated tasks? How could they earn? Ida Merzan, one of the Korczak's assistant, relates, "It is known from the Home's history that Korczak would collect milk teeth from the children. In reality, he would buy milk teeth from them. He wished the children to have some money. He didn't wish to give it 'for free' – so he would buy whatever 'property' they had."

By the way, to have a personal property at the Home was a right. As well as a right was to exchange it with other children. It also was a tiny shop at the Home where children could spend their money buying small things for themselves, their families and friends.

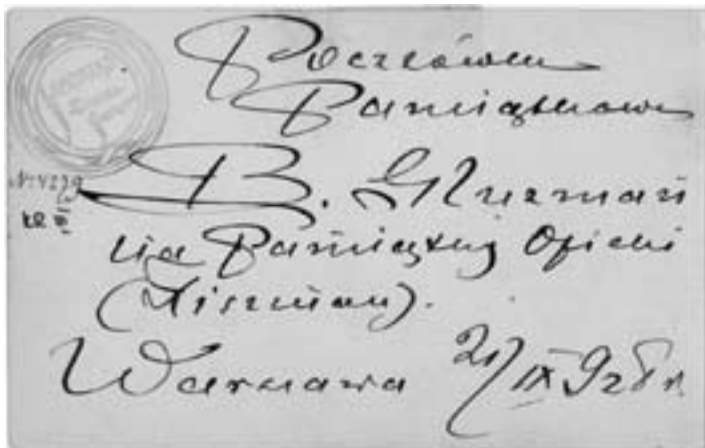
One more democratic principle – the freedom of choice – was exercised at the Home.

At the Home as at any community of children between 7 and 14 years old, a matter of discipline was an important one, and Korczak achieved good results combining seriousness of the task with playfulness, which is so dear for children. Here is an example.

Every three months, children would announce voluntarily their readiness to participate in the "Early rising program". Those who got up early without a reminder would receive a postcard.



Rota in the kitchen, The Home for Orphans



On the reverse Korczak wrote: B. Gluzman, in recognition of Mentoring (Fiszman). Warsaw 21/IX [1] 928. Leon Gluzman Collection. The Ghetto Fighter's Museum, Israel



Commemorative Postcard of Mentoring



Engagement in sports was also voluntary. However, the effort of children in the “hard work of growing” – as Korczak called it – was appreciated.

The same was with the Mentoring program when older children looked after the juniors.

Not everything though went smoothly, not always. Not every child accepted these strategies. Korczak emphasized that whichever educational method had been used, an educator could never expect hundred percent pedagogical result.

The child's right to be respected worked on reciprocal basis: Everyone at the Home should respect compulsory rules but the personal will of every individual should be respected as well. Let me provide you with a testimony of that in the Home's spiritual life.

The Home was a secular institution but religious practice was allowed. Children themselves decided to participate or not to participate in common prayers.

Korczak's deep respect for children can be seen also in his talks with them. He believed that they could answer – as far their understanding of the world allowed – ‘adult’ questions including those of faith, God, sense of identity etc. When put on paper these talks clearly present not only how he worked with children but also the effects of his work with children.

Many more examples of democracy at the Home could be given. I just would like to mention the fact that in spite of harsh conditions, Korczak maintained the same style of managing the Home as the Children's Republic even in the Ghetto.

It's also worthy to note that as charismatic as Korczak was and, no doubt, his role at the

Home was significant, the daily system of life that had been introduced there worked perfectly even in his absence – for example during WWI when he as a doctor served in the army or when he was busy with his other various activities such as book writing and lecturing.

Isn't that the best proof of democracy when the law and not the person prevails?

Korczak's description of every educational technique applied at the Home was surprisingly detailed. Yet his educational mode was not about techniques. It was rather about the principles of education than about its tools.

Provocatively, I would say that Korczak's unique pedagogy was, as a matter of fact, less pedagogical and more metaphysical. Thus, it is no point to replicate his techniques. But it is fruitful to follow his principles – they don't age.

Finally, the biographies of Korczak's pupils are quite impressive. What was the reason behind such a great life success of most of them? It was seemingly Korczak's focus on teaching children not only practical skills but the authentic values of life, not only how to survive but how to be. The sense of freedom and the corresponding sense of responsibility, awareness of rights and duties, formed in childhood, that was what helped them to become independent and responsible citizens in later life as adults, wherever they happened to live.

Reflecting on the development of the bloodstained European history of the first half of the 20th century, Janusz Korczak once said, “Tyranny and wars start at home.” Unfolding this aphorism, we can say: “Peace and democracy also start at home.” In this particular case, peace and democracy started at the Home for Orphans in Poland, Warsaw, exactly one hundred years ago. ■

To Care for the Soul of the Child: The Legacy of Janusz Korczak

First, I want to express my deep appreciation to the UBC Faculty of Education, the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and all the sponsors of today's event for including me on the program for this very moving and important day. It is a great honour to be with you, and to be offered the privilege to share some of my experiences with, and thoughts about, the life and work of Janusz Korczak.

I am gathering materials at the moment for a history of the relatively new profession of child and youth care (called *social pedagogy* in much of Europe) and while I consider Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi to be the first child and youth care worker, I consider Janusz Korczak to be the greatest child and youth care worker. Child and Youth Care as a discipline emerged through the experience of those willing to live and work in the life-space of young people, to learn from this shared experience how to relate to young people who were victims of trauma, and to develop ways to support their holistic development.

I must admit, Korczak scares me. At times, he terrifies me. And I think what lies at the heart of my reaction is his unwavering commitment to virtually total consistency in his moral and daily life decisions. As has been noted by others, the manner in which he died was simply a logical conclusion of the way he lived. In that sense, it was unremarkable. But how Korczak lived and worked – that was truly remarkable.

In the areas of child care and child rights, Korczak is still ahead of his time, one hundred years later. His creation of truly child-friendly and respectful environments, through the implementation of principles, structures and procedures in his orphanages, is still far too rare an occurrence in our global education



Presented by Prof. James Anglin, School of Child and Youth Care University of Victoria, BC, Canada

and child care systems. Those of us working in these fields could do well to ask ourselves, on at least a daily basis – “What would Korczak say?”

I wonder if discovering the story of Korczak is not one of those powerful moments when one always remembers where one was and how one reacted. I can remember very vividly sitting in the front row at a conference in 1985, in Boston, when the presenter was talking about the ‘Pioneers’ in child and youth work, and I became transfixed as he recounted a summary of Korczak’s life, work and death. Betty Jean Lifton recounts a similar reaction on first hearing about this man from Polish friends visiting with her in Cape Cod, and colleagues and students of mine have shared similar experiences of clearly remembering where and when they first learned about Korczak.



Subsequent to this dramatic introduction to Korczak, I was able to get a copy of Lifton's biography and to read it cover to cover. Then I saw the Wajda film *Korczak*. From that time onward, I took every opportunity to share Korczak's story with child and youth care colleagues and students. In fact, I presented to two classes of new students at the University of Victoria just 6 weeks ago, and there was great interest in having a "Korczak evening", where we would watch the film and discuss his work and legacies.

In November 1989, I was at meetings at the World Health Organization headquarters in Geneva, and during a break in the discussions, I was standing in the administrative offices of the Director of the Maternal and Child Health Unit when a large fax starting printing beside me. The fact that it kept printing and printing caught my attention, so I made a comment about it. The Director picked up the first page and said, "Oh, it's the text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that was approved today by the General Assembly in New York."

This was another of those unforgettable moments. I was amazed to learn about this document of which I had not previously been aware. The Director kindly had a copy made for me, and on the plane back to Victoria I devoured the text and began to realize the potential power it could have for education, advocacy and accountability on behalf of the interests and rights of children around the world.

The day after I arrived home, I started to contact people I knew at senior levels in the Ministry responsible for children (I think it was called Human Resources then), but received little expression of interest. However, the Deputy Ombudsman for Children and Youth at the time, Brent Parfitt, immediately saw the potential of this Convention for the work of his office, and I spent an afternoon going

through every article with his Child and Youth team to discuss their implications for services in British Columbia.

Brent briefed Premier Vander Zalm, enlisted his support for the Convention, and became the champion of the convention for British Columbia. In 2005 Brent was appointed to the United Nations International Committee on the Rights of the Child and served in that capacity until 2009 when he retired from his position in the BC Ombudsman's office.

As I learned more about the Convention, I became aware that Poland was a major promoter of this Convention, and was a lead, if not the lead, nation in its drafting and approval by the United Nations, and I was puzzled as to why Poland was such a champion. I must admit that I did not immediately connect Korczak with this document, but as I dug deeper, I began to realize that his life and work must have been a major reason for Poland's role in promoting the Convention. Then I discovered that Poland had also been a lead in the approval of the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and subsequently some of those involved in drafting the Convention confirmed the Korczak connection. To my mind, Korczak can be considered the Godfather of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Clearly this is one of his major legacies as well as a legacy of Poland as a country, which is carrying on Korczak's work as a champion of children's rights globally.

Just one more brief personal story. In 1993, I attended a conference in Warsaw, and I added a day to my itinerary to explore some of the places I had read about in Lifton's book. It was in effect a Korczak pilgrimage.

I recall heading for Krochmalna Street, to see if I could find where the Dom Sierot orphanage had stood before the war; I assumed it had been de-

stroyed. As I walked towards Krochmalna Street, suddenly through the trees I saw the orphanage building which I immediately recognized from the photos in Lifton's book. I was stunned, and quickened my pace towards the building. To my amazement I discovered that an orphanage was still operating in the building, and I was given a tour by the woman in charge of the program and some of the children themselves. They even unlocked the small museum to Korczak, which was housed then on the gallery overlooking the old games hall. My understanding from a Polish colleague was that the orphanage building had survived as it was made the headquarter for one of the Nazi's paramilitary institution in Warsaw – one of history's many ironies.

When I agreed with enthusiasm and some trepidation to present at this gathering, I knew that by choosing the title I did that I would need to do – literally – some serious soul-searching. What did Korczak mean by “caring for the soul of the child”? And what do we know now, one hundred years later, about the human soul? Not being a professional philosopher or theologian, I must admit to only dabbling in some literature and engaging in some dialogue in search of a slightly deeper understanding of soul. I have concluded that Korczak, once again, was a hundred years ahead of his time on this issue as well. A quote from the man himself (in Sven Hartman's *Janusz Korczak's legacy: An inestimable source of inspiration*. [In:] *Janusz Korczak. The Children's Right to Respect*. Council of Europe, 2009, p. 14): “The child [...] that little nothing, is the flesh-and-blood brother of the ocean wave, of the wind, and ashes; of the sun and the Milky Way. This speck of dust is the brother of every ear of corn, every blade of grass [...] every fledgling from the nest [...] there is something in the child which feels and explores – suffers, desires, and delights [...] loves and hates, believes and doubts, something that approaches, something that turns aside. In its thought this small speck of dust can

embrace everything: stars and oceans, the mountain and the abyss. And what is the actual substance of his soul if not the cosmos, but without spatial dimensions...”

I must say to not having found any better explanation of human soul than this. Further, some of the most recent publications on science are suggesting that what Korczak understood one hundred years ago is not a metaphor, but literally and scientifically true.

This understanding has been summed up in a book by Jacob Berkowitz published this year called *The Stardust Revolution* (Prometheus Books, New York: 2012). (Some of you may have heard him interviewed on the CBC program *Quirks and Quarks* in September.) This revolution in our knowledge and understanding is being characterized by Berkowitz as the third major paradigm shift of modernity and post-modernity after the Copernican and Darwinian revolutions. The recent work of astrochemists has demonstrated that our bodies and brains are in fact made of stardust, that is, the particles of dust (mainly carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen) produced in the formation of stars.

One noted scientist and theologian, John Polkinghorne, refers to the soul as an “information bearing pattern” which shapes (or in Aristotelian terms, gives form) to each of us as human beings. We are stardust, but with our own personal and distinctive patterns that manifest themselves as, but are not identical to, such things as our DNA, RNA and genetic makeup. The struggle to align our actions and decisions with this inner pattern can be largely ignored and repressed (as most of us do), or can be actively engaged through a variety of spiritual practices (as some of us do), or can become the central and virtually sole focus and preoccupation of one's life (as a few, such as Korczak, are willing and able to do).



The life of Janusz Korczak, to my mind, was an epic struggle between ego and soul, and perhaps it is his uncompromising outer demonstrations of this inner struggle, through his writings and actions, that are his most enduring and powerful legacy.

I have come to think that for Korczak, writing was a key part of his soul work. Michel Foucault has written about “self writing”, or “writing the self”. One can use the act of writing in an attempt to “write yourself to freedom”, or put another way, to “write yourself into selfhood”. I believe that at the most fundamental level, this is what writing meant to Korczak. I have the sense from reading various forms of his extensive writings that he had to write to actualize components of his Self, or his soul. At times he writes himself into his “scientist self”, at other times he writes himself into his “journalistic self”, his “fictional self”, his “idealistic self”, his “advocate self”, his “doctor self”, his “professor self”, his “spiritual self”, his “humble self”, his “angry self”, his “quizzical self”, and so on. I think that at least part of the reason for the power of Korczak’s writing, even his disjointed notes and fragmented observations, is that he seems always to be struggling to “write himself into being”... into being whatever he feels his soul is calling or demanding him to be.

But such ongoing and compulsive soul work is extraordinarily demanding, draining and oftentimes disorienting. I would suggest that Korczak, consciously or semi-consciously, chose to institutionalize himself for most of his life in order to provide a structure, perhaps a necessary structure, for his turbulent inner struggles, and to be able to cope with the effects of the traumas and torments he experienced in his life, perhaps beginning with the madness and death of his father, the subsequent poverty and deprivation his family endured, and the many years of being subjected to the depravities of war, racism, violence and social disintegration.

I think that for Korczak, his passionate commitment to understand the child demanded an exploration of the meaning of human freedom in the face of the dual limitations of material embodiment and social controls. It also entailed a brave and painful exploration of his own soul. Korczak was profoundly affected by his father’s mental illness and possible suicide, and was continually fighting with depression and what he feared might be an inevitable descent into madness.

To conclude my brief remarks, I have come to think that perhaps Janusz Korczak’s most enduring legacy is his sometimes terrifying, and always troubling, example of soul work. It seems Korczak was driven to write himself into who he was, destined to be. It is a gift to the present and future that so many of his writings, his “writing-himself-into-himself” works, have survived to inspire and challenge us to engage in our own soul work.

I would like to end with a quotation from Ludwig Wittgenstein, which seems an appropriate endnote for a reflection on the meaning of Korczak’s life and work.

“No cry of torment can be greater than the cry of one man.

Or again, no torment can be greater than what a single human being may suffer.

The whole planet can suffer no greater torment than a single soul.”

Quoted in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?* by Norman Malcolm. New York, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 128.

It's All about Adults – Reflections on the Childhood in the 21st Century



*Presented by Dr. Anna M. Kindler,
Vice Provost of UBC*

If I were to try to summarize the central thesis of Janusz Korczak, articulated much more completely by the previous speakers, I would say that it could perhaps be well captured in a statement: "It is all about the child." Korczak's concept of a healthy and just society, his educational theory, as well as his life as a physician, pedagogue, and ultimately a wartime hero, all evolved around the rights of children and the importance of adult responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of a child.

In my presentation I will argue, that despite much rhetoric to the contrary, Western societies in the 21st century have largely abandoned Korczak's legacy of placing the child and his or her rights at the forefront of our considerations, decisions and actions.

I will argue that we live in a society which, in reality, is all about the adults. I will point to what

I consider to be a profoundly troubling paradox: Where the enactment of civil liberties, which are – and rightly so – at the foundation of contemporary democracies, has led to a subrogation of children's rights to the rights of adults, acting on their own desires, ambitions and prerogatives; effectively constraining the rights of a child.

I should make it clear that my intention is not to speak against civil liberties in the defence of a child, but rather to focus on what I see as an educational failure to prepare societies to exercise civil liberties in ways that would support Korczak's dream of a world where children's rights come first.

As this conference is hosted by the Faculty of Education of one of the world's leading universities, I will close with an appeal to those in the audience who are responsible for education of future generations of teachers and children, to ponder on their responsibility and ways in which, through the education that they provide, we may come closer to a 21st century's response to the challenge that Janusz Korczak placed in front of us.

Let me begin by referring to the work of a psychologist and social theorist Erich Fromm who in his seminal text *Escape from Freedom* made an important distinction between the positive and negative freedom and suggested that the interplay of these freedoms can have a powerful impact on societies.

Negative freedom, according to Fromm, is the freedom from constraints that may be externally imposed; the emancipation from social conventions, norms and restrictions imposed by other individuals, institutions, and agencies. Positive freedom, on the other hand, is the freedom to



pursue one's potential to its fullest; it allows the individual to assert his or her will and act on his or her desires; it frees the individual from internal constraints. Isaiah Berlin in his 1958 inaugural speech at the Oxford University entitled *Two Concepts of Liberty* summed up positive freedom in a statement: "I am my own master."

Almost three decades later, Charles Taylor made an important observation that will anchor my talk. When speaking about individuals exercising their positive freedom, he underscored the importance of a thoughtful, considerate judgment; he posited that exercising positive freedom requires "mature state of decision making."

I am concerned that we live in a society where, having largely eliminated constraints to negative freedom and having widely asserted positive freedom provisions, with watchdogs and organizations ready to act and contest any related infractions, we have failed to ensure that adults exercising these freedoms care enough about the decision making maturity of which Taylor spoke in his essay.

Let me share with you some examples of adults exercising their positive and negative freedoms by asserting their rights to parenting, in ways that allow them to realize themselves as free and unrestricted agents. I am sure that these parents do not consider themselves as unloving, uncaring or negligent. They see choosing to drink and smoke when pregnant as their right; find it funny to take a picture with a child serving them a can of beer; judging by the expression on their faces they are clearly focused not to drop the child as they pass her to each other over a mountain crevasse while indulging in their outdoor adventures; they feel that they made sufficient precautions to protect the child from harm when they spend time with their friends by keeping their toddler on a leash; they justify in their minds that realizing their own unfulfilled dreams of fame and success through their child's involvement in beauty

pageants is actually beneficial to the child; they feel entitled to display their style and sexuality in any circumstance that they please, and they find it appropriate to follow their interests and ambitions, as this weightlifter does, even if this exposes the infant harnessed to his chest to potential harm.

If you have not previously seen Honey Boo Boo, you probably have heard her name as President Barak Obama jokingly referred to her endorsement of his candidacy in one of the recent presidential debates. Despite her amusing nickname and the President's joke, there is nothing funny about Alana Thompson. She is a confused, overweight, 5 year old girl, who's emotional, intellectual and physical needs have been subrogated to her parent's desire for fame and fortune. Exercising their parental rights, Alana's parents enrolled her in child beauty pageants, requiring her to dress and perform in ways which – while apparently amusing to some adult audiences – deprive Alana of her dignity as a child. Honey Boo Boo is a joke that she cannot understand herself, and the form of entertainment that she provides can perhaps be compared to the amusement that the "throwing of midgets" provided to medieval audiences.

And yet, "HERE COMES HONEY BOO BOO" has become a pop culture phenomenon," according to Amy Winter, general manager of *The Learning Channel*. "What you see is what you get and we are excited to share even more of Alana and her family's unbridled hilarity, sincerity and love with our viewers." Regrettably, what Ms. Winter refers to as hilarity, sincerity and love, amounts to an un-moderated vulgarity, uninhibited rudeness and the exploitation of a child for adult entertainment and parental monetary gains. Yet, as a society, we not only tolerate the violation of Alana's rights but also have no answers or strategies on how to prevent other parents – now, and in the future – from such misguided exercises of their civil liberties.

We have all been moved in the recent weeks by the tragic story of Amanda Todd, a teenage girl who committed suicide unable to cope with the cyber stalking, trauma and bullying inflicted on her as a result of a seemingly minor indiscretion: baring her breasts in front of a camera and electronically sharing the image with 'a friend' who should have not been trusted. As the outrage, sadness, disbelief, anger, and grief began to settle, the search for the culprit preoccupied social media. Some were pointing fingers at the pedophile who was using blackmail to entice Amanda to cater to his or her sick desires for further exposure; others were blaming the bullying culture in our schools and the cruelty of Amanda's peers. As I reflect on Amanda's story, I can't shake, however the sense that her tragedy has much deeper roots and many more accomplices: In a way we, the society, have failed Amanda, in her rights as a child to be nurtured as a child, to be guided as a child, to be protected as a child – to have a dignified childhood.

Amanda's death closely coincided with Madonna's concert in Vancouver, which made a big splash in the media. In articles and reviews surrounding the concert, the *Material Girl* was being praised for having taught young women "to be fully female and sexual while still exercising total control of their lives [...] showing girls how to be attractive, sensual, energetic, ambitious, aggressive and funny — all at the same time." (Camille Paglia quoted in the *Vancouver Sun*). Lori Burns, professor of music at the University of Ottawa credited Madonna for "being a big part of creating the world we live in." As I reflected on these comments, I could not stop wondering what role Madonna could have possibly played in Amanda's tragedy. As professor Burns asserted that "Music is a powerful cultural form. As soon as an issue is expressed through music, it has a huge cultural reach. Madonna has had a huge cultural reach," the author of the *Vancouver Sun* article posited that "More than two decades later, an entire generation of young women has

grown up in a world where skimpy lingerie can be equated with self-determination." Madonna and the society that has validated and elevated her behaviours, bestowed on girls like Amanda negative freedom of emancipation from the appropriateness of personal privacy and reinforced her positive freedom to expose and share her nudity. After all, if it is appropriate for a 50 year old mother to publically display her sexuality on a world stage, why would it not be appropriate for a teen to send a picture of her bare breasts to someone she considered to be a friend?

I wonder if Madonna ever thought about the impact of her actions, as liberating as they may have been for her and other mature women who feel a need to publically celebrate their sexuality, on young girls developing a false sense of what is appropriate and safe for them to share with others. I also wonder if we, adults at large, as we pursue our individual freedoms, including the freedom to bare our bodies and lives in reality shows, concern ourselves enough with how these intrusions into the most private spheres of our lives inadvertently give credibility to a pedophile's claims, made to a vulnerable child, that what he/she seek is acceptable?

Children's understanding of what is right and wrong is powerfully communicated through music and sport idols, and through the visual culture that is ever powerful in their lives. Children's access to technology-based media is practically unlimited as from the very early childhood years they have access not only to television but cell phones, iPods, iPads, computers, video games – and all that can be accessed through these devices.

The practice of sexting that Amanda engaged in has been fuelled by easy access to pornographic sites; 10-year-old boys can now avail themselves with images more sexually explicit, graphic and violent than adult men were able to find on the pages of the *Penthouse* magazine, that until fairly recently was kept on the top



shelves, with front pages covered, in magazine stores. The sense of what is normal, what is appropriate and what is right has become distorted for children who are now drawn to imagery beyond their ability to comprehend and judge.

The visual worlds that children encounter are often busy, violent and sexually explicit and include imagery of children dressed and acting well beyond their age. And while some parents or schools attempt to put limits on what imagery children consume, their efforts are bound to fail in the world where the media-propelled visual culture penetrates lives with more power than ever before. What children see, read and learn to perceive as “normal” in their everyday lives dangerously shrinks the distance between childhood and adulthood.

It could be suggested, that having access to adult-like life gives children more freedom, voice and choices – and some see this is a good thing. The idea of children being able to fully exercise their positive and negative freedoms even very early in life has certainly some supporters. In fact, one of the ways in which some adults chose to exercise their own civil liberties imposes the requirement to do so on a child, regardless of whether he or she may be cognitively and emotionally ready to do so.

Meet Storm, whose parents decided to raise the child “genderless.” When Storm was born, the couple sent an email to friends and family stating, and I quote: “We’ve decided not to share Storm’s sex for now — a tribute to freedom and choice in place of limitation, a stand up to what the world could become in Storm’s lifetime (a more progressive place? ...)” They compelled Storm’s 2 and 5 year old brothers to keep Storm’s sex a secret. Storm’s parents believe that children “can make meaningful decisions from a very early age.” Storm’s father stated in an interview that “What we noticed is that parents make so many choices for their children. It’s obnoxious.”

His mother argued that “in not telling the gender of my precious baby, I am saying to the world, ‘Please can you just let Storm discover for him/herself what s (he) wants to be’”.

While Storm’s parents seem well intended, their views go counter more than just intuitive wisdom. Child psychologist Diane Ehrensaft, author of the *Gender Born, Gender Made*, a guide for parents of nonconforming kids, strongly advocates that parents should support gender-creative children, which includes the transgendered, who feel born in the wrong bodies, and gender hybrids, who feel they are part girl and part boy. But she is concerned about parents “denying the child a way to position himself or herself in a world where you are either male, female or in between” and worries about the effect of this confusion and exclusion on Storm’s psychological health and well-being.

She is also concerned about Storm’s siblings being asked to keep a secret about the baby arguing that very young children are not ready “to do the kind of sophisticated discernment we do about when a secret is necessary.” Yet, Storm’s parents strong personal beliefs are left uncontested and they are not only free but comfortable – and proud – to pursue their experiment. Storm will grow up in a gender identify void, that one can only hope she or he will be able to deal with.

I would like to close by pointing to what I see as a sad paradox of the 21st century. When we look at the Korczak’s era and consider children’s rights during that time, it is clear that they were challenged by the circumstances of war, political oppression, poverty and lack of educational opportunity. War-torn societies could only dream of civil liberties which could have been seen as a panacea to many of their problems. Yet, several decades later, gains in freedom, civil liberties, prosperity and access to education and information have created new significant challenges to children’s rights – ones that I doubt Korczak ever anticipated.



The progress on children's rights will require our collective reflection on the positive and negative freedoms that define our civil liberties and, as a society, considering how these need to be enacted, if children are to be given the rights that they deserve – including the right to a childhood. I would like to make it clear, that I do not see us limiting negative freedoms through laws that would restrict them, as the answer to the challenges that we face. However, I believe that there is much that we can and should do, through education, to make us think more critically about the ways in which we chose to exercise our positive freedoms; an education that would drive

the maturity of thought, depth of consideration, empathy and compassion, while moderating our self-focused ambitions and desires; an education that would naturally make us think: "I am my own master – but it is all about the child."

Unlike Janusz Korczak, we are fortunate enough to live in an era where we do not need to put our lives at risk to defend and protect our children; all that is required of us is to take a critical look at how we exercise our rights and freedoms and consider a thoughtful self-moderation in their enactment – for the benefit of the child. ■

Korczak's Legacy: The Power of Play



Presented by Prof. Marilyn Chapman, Director of Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research (IECER), Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC

One of the most important legacies of Janusz Korczak to children's rights and education around the world is his work on play. His books incorporate many of the ideas that provide a

foundation for early childhood today; his educational practice was known for playfulness.

In 2006, the Canadian Association of Young Children (CAYC) has issued a position statement on children's right to learn through play. CAYC believes that children's natural inclination to play should be nourished and encouraged; the Association acknowledges that play is important through everyone's life – beyond childhood into adulthood. Through play, children ask questions, seek solutions and grapple with real issues. CAYC urges all Canadians to become advocates for play.

CAYC believes that:

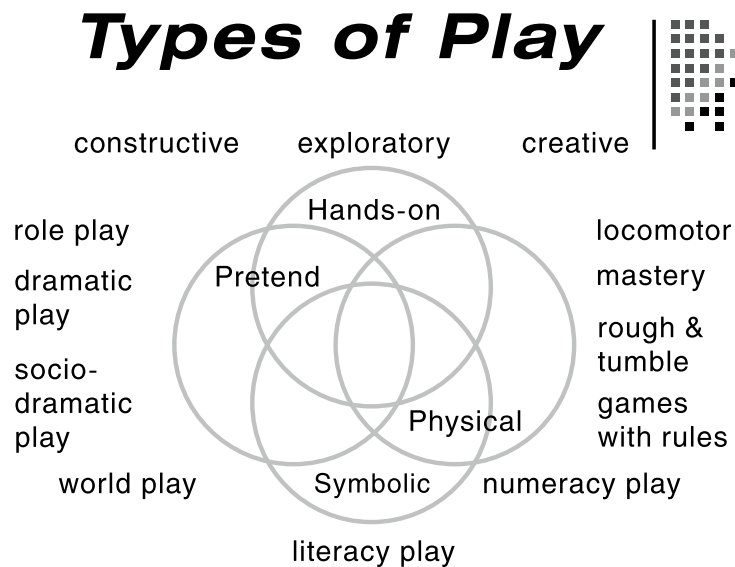
- *children learn through play*
- *play contributes to the quality of life of young children*
- *children need time, space, and materials to play*
- *all children benefit from opportunities to be in safe, stimulating environments that encourage them to play*
- *children need adults to support and enable their play*



Through their play children develop sensory motor control, eye-hand coordination and problem solving skills. Physical, social, intellectual and emotional development, are all enhanced through play as well.

There are different types of play:

tend narrative and combining it with the reality of one's experience in a playful settings, at least in childhood, how we develop our major personal understandings of how the world works. We do so initially by imagining possibilities—simulating what might be, and then testing this against what actually is." (Brown, 2009, p. 36). Since the time that Korczak was working with



Child-initiated play lays a foundation for learning and academic success. It promotes muscle development and motor skills, creative thinking, imagination, symbolic understanding, social skills, self-regulation, and understanding of their social and natural worlds.

Another type of play is teacher-guided play. It provides many similar benefits, but it also promotes critical thinking, language awareness, world knowledge, literacy and numeracy, social-emotional, awareness and enhanced self-regulation.

Play – How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul is research by Dr. Stuart Brown, an American psychiatrist, clinical researcher, and the founder of the National Institute for Play, based on 6000 studies of play. As author states, "Play's process of capturing a pre-

children, there has been much research, especially on the impact of play on the brain. "Play is a profound biological process. It has evolved over eons in many animal species to promote survival. It shapes the brain and makes many animal species more adaptable. In higher animals, it fosters empathy and makes possible complex social groups. For us, play lies at the core of creativity and innovation. We are built to play and built through play." (Brown, 2009, p. 5).

Being emotionally safe is important. Brown believes that "during play, the brain is making sense of itself through simulation and testing. Play activity is actually helping sculpt the brain. In play, most of the time we are able to try out things without threatening our physical or emotional well-being." We are safe precisely because we are just playing." (Brown, 2009, p. 34).



Briefly, about how play influences the brain. According to Dr. Jaak Panskepp, an American psychologist and a neuroscientist, active play selectively stimulates brain-derived neurotrophic factors (which stimulates nerve growth) in the amygdala (where emotions get processed) and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (where executive decisions are processed).

Play is something many animals do – especially the more highly developed. Playing, children become more adept at discriminating relevant from irrelevant information, monitoring and organizing their own thoughts and feelings, and planning for the future. Brown wrote: “Animals that play, a lot quickly learn how to navigate their world and adapt to it. In short, they are smarter.” (Brown, p. 33)

As research on play and well-being shows, “play is intensely pleasurable. It energizes us and enlivens us. It eases our burdens. It renews our natural sense of optimism and opens us up to new possibilities.” (Brown, 2009, p. 4) “The ability to play is critical not only to being happy, but also to sustaining social relationships and being a creative, innovative person.” (Brown, p. 6) “Life-long play is central to our continued well-being, adaptation, and social cohesiveness.” (Brown, p. 58)

According to the research on connection of play and social emotional learning (SEL), play fosters development of emotional intelligence, how to make sound judgments, pretend rehearsal for the challenges and ambiguities of life, learn about the environment and rules of engagement with friend and foes. In humans verbal jousting can take the place of physical rough-and-tumble play.

In regards to play and self-regulation, self-regulation has been shown to be at least as critical as cognitive development. Sometimes it's referred to as executive functioning. “Self regulation in young children predicts their later function-

ing in areas such as problem solving, planning, focused attention, and metacognition, and thus contributes to their success as learners” and also that “play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence.” (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

Why play is important for all children and adults?

“Brain scans and behavioral analysis have demonstrated that in modern society, the executive centers of the brain continue to undergo changes into the twenties. In an individual who is well-adjusted and safe, play very likely continues to prompt continued neurogenesis throughout our long lives.” (Brown, p. 58)

Conclusion

Characteristics of play:

Anticipation: Sense of wonder and curiosity, a slight uncertainty or risk is involved, but not so much that it overwhelms the fun, which leads to...

Surprise: The unexpected, a discovery, new sensation or idea, or insight, which produces...

Pleasure: A good feeling like that we experience in the punch line of a joke; next we have...

Understanding: Acquiring new knowledge, synthesizing separate concepts, or incorporating new ideas that were unknown, leading to...

Strength: The feeling of mastery or empowerment that comes from knowing or being able to do more, which results in...

Poise: Contentment, composure, and a sense of balance in life. (Brown, 2009, p. 19)

There is no way really to understand play without remembering the feeling of play. Play is a state of mind, rather than an activity. ■



Janusz Korczak – A Moral Exemplar



*Presented by Dr. Theresa Rogers, Deputy Head,
Department of Language and Literacy Educa-
tion, Faculty of Education, UBC*

As Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo put it, “Things are somehow attached to each other”, I am on this panel today to honour Janusz Korczak, and also to talk about an important admirer of Korczak, my late uncle Lawrence Kohlberg, who was a well-known educational psychologist and theorist of moral education. Larry, who was my mother’s baby brother, would have been 85 this year (1927 – 1987). It is through my uncle’s work and life that I am familiar with Korczak’s legacy.

Larry began his intellectual life as a moral philosopher and then moral psychologist mainly interested in ideas of justice and a just society. He noted that his interest in moral education arose in part in response to the Holocaust, which included his own experiences smuggling refugees into Palestine after the war. Larry was particularly impressed and

inspired by Korczak’s moral actions in the midst of such profound injustice and tragedy. Larry is probably best known for his theory of the stages of moral development. Anyone who has taken a psychology 100 course may have had one or one-half lectures on his work, which was in many ways based on the cognitive development work of Jean Piaget. Others of you may have remembered doing a high school class activity around the “Heinz dilemma” – whether a man should steal a drug he cannot afford if that drug can save the life of his wife. Late in his career, Larry worked in education, developing what he called “just community schools.”

Larry believed that children are burgeoning moral philosophers whose moral reasoning developed over time and with experience. He argued that the highest stage of reasoning, “a post-conventional level” acknowledges the universal respect for the rights and dignity of all people.

In his work, Larry recognized what he called the “roll call of saints” or moral exemplars – which included Korczak. In fact, he felt the most powerful form of moral education was to observe those who have the highest moral principles and, who, like Janusz Korczak, enact their principles through word and deed – providing a kind of public moral education. That is, he would argue that Korczak taught his moral philosophy through living it.

Larry was so impressed by Korczak’s story that he drew on his life and work to posit an even higher stage of moral development – one “that represents the truest and most inspired moral educators”. He argued that Korczak understood

that what he could demand or expect of children was less than what he was ready to give them himself. He describes Korczak's life as a spiritual journey that few undertake, and even fewer undertake so successfully.

For my uncle Larry, Korczak's story illuminated the limits of justice in a world of tragedy and the strength of a sense of justice for living in such a world. Korczak treated chil-

dren with love, dignity, respect and profound commitment; as Larry put it, "[Korczak's] devotion [...] represents an act of grace."

It is our honour here in the Faculty of Education to be housing Korczak's bronze-relief to remind us of the importance of our work and of the children and youth we serve. ■

Research in Early Childhood Education and Children's Rights

Introduction

Increasingly, children's participation in research has become more common across the globe. Building on the importance of children's participation, and including children's voices and perspectives, educators and researchers alike have intentionally facilitated children's participation into their projects and their pedagogy. While this is to be applauded there has not been the same attention to the ethical implications of including children into research. What does the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children [UNCROC], indicate for children's rights and research? Have we learnt from the lessons in the past?

Protection and Participation – Values of UNCROC

"UNCROC: States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

Research involving young children do involve consent processes — but these consents



*Presented by Judith Duncan, Associate Professor,
School of Educational Studies and Leadership,
University of Canterbury, Christchurch,
New Zealand*

merely ask the parent or legal guardian to give consent on behalf of their child to participate in the research. The argument is that in the early childhood years children are too young and too immature to be able to understand the consequences of giving consent, that is, agree-



ing to the research and all its consequences. However, this is not the intent of the article from UNCROC quote above.

“The responsibility vested in parents and other primary caregivers is linked to the requirement that they act in children’s best interests. Article 5 of UNCROC states that parents’ role is to offer appropriate direction and guidance” in “the exercise by the child of the rights in the ... Convention.” (General Comment 7, 2005, p. 8)

General Comment 7, written to assist decision-making in regards to children in the early childhood years, understands age, maturity, and parents’ responsibilities in regard to ‘best interests’ in a different way to that of the incompetent child, where the adult must make all the decisions. They state that perceived immaturity is not an excuse for “authoritarian practices that restrict children’s autonomy and self-expression”. (General Comment 7, 2005, p. 8) The argument that parents are ‘protecting’ their children by consenting on their behalf, or withdrawing their consent on behalf of their children, does not fit comfortably with the articles in UNCROC. Interestingly, many adults themselves, do not understand what they are agreeing to when participating in a research project, yet we accept that they are ‘mature enough’ to consent on their own and someone else’s (their child’s) behalf.

Another approach has been for researchers to argue that children can offer ‘assent’ in place of ‘consent’ to be part of the research by willingly participating in the activities associated with the research, or indicating withdrawal of assent by not participating in the activities. This approach is an attempt to address the difficulties in gaining ‘informed consent’ from children. However, what is underestimated in this alternative approach to children’s consents is that it ignores that ‘legal consent’ will have

already been given by the parent and so there may be pressure on the child to participate, the child may be unable to withdraw their participation (for example, sleep studies of infants), or the child may have not been given the information in a way that they can understand so they can withdraw their participation. Unless a researcher is genuine in respecting and responding to the child in the context, then consent or assent is not an actual reality and may position the research as engaging in ‘deceit’ or ‘coercion’— both research practices with adults that are no longer acceptable.

As research with very young children continues to happen every day, with parents agreeing on their child’s behalf, does this traditional means of gaining consent for children to be involved in research fit comfortably with the provisions of UNCROC? When the ‘call for science’ becomes irresistible and parents engage their children’s participation in research whose ‘best interests’ are being served? The greater good of science? The parent who may be receiving a monetary reimbursement? The researcher who wishes to contribute to new knowledge?

While it is easier to discuss older research projects and be critical of their methods and approaches, thinking that these would never happen now (for example: Ivan Pavlov didn’t just confine himself to experimenting on dogs, he was also involved with experiments on children. Just like the dogs, the children were also experimented on – often with parents present) a quick search on the internet shows that there are still experiments on children occurring, where it would be difficult to see how children would have, or could have, consented to participate, and where there are real possibilities for harm:

For example, see *The Marshmallow Study, 2012* at <http://www.rochester.edu/news/show.php?id=4622>. This is a well-known study

examining children's self-control which has occurred regularly over many years, where children are tempted with a marshmallow and then provided with different 'stories' as to what may happen to them, or the marshmallow, if they eat it prior to a specified time. The study reports on the creative antics of the children and, in this version of the experiment "demonstrates that being able to delay gratification is influenced as much by the environment as by innate ability. Children who experienced reliable interactions immediately before the marshmallow task, waited on average four times longer — 12 versus three minutes — than youngsters in similar but unreliable situations." The recent common use of 'brain sensor caps' on young children (often babies) is another example, where questions on consent or assent need to be asked (see <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2181542/Extraordinary-images-shows-baby-wired-autism-research-university.html> or http://www.vt.edu/spotlight/innovation/2007-12-24_cognition/2007-12-24_cognition.ht).

How could or do these experiments fulfill the following articles of UNCROC?

Article 36

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that: "No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

In contrast to the examples provided above, there are researchers who are now developing methods and processes to ensure that children do understand and can participate in a way that respects their rights and enables active and meaningful participation. The key difference here is increasing the participation of children

in both consenting to the research – understanding what consent means – and having an appropriate way of indicating consent, through developing the tools to match the "age and maturity of the child."

New Zealand Examples:

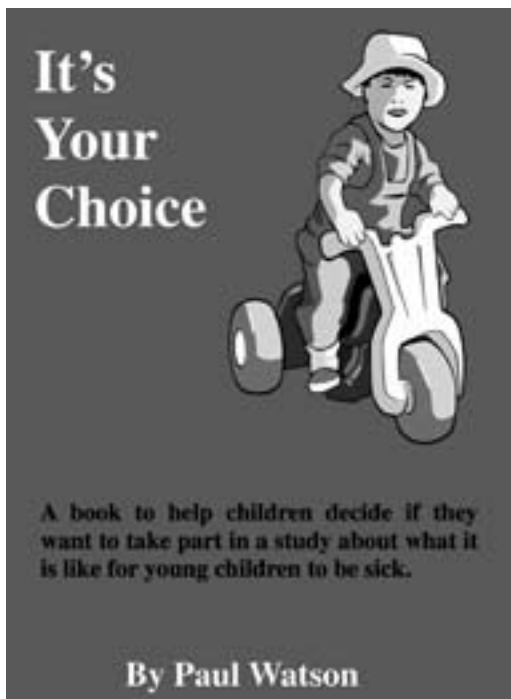
1. Learning in the Making. This was a three-year study of children's learning dispositions, based in early childhood centers and the first year at school. We tracked 18 children using video cameras, clip on microphones to record their interactions, interviews and field notes. All parents gave consent, all the teachers gave their consent. The children had the study explained to them – the key is that they would not have realized how long that three years would be nor how this would impact on their daily activities. So we designed a waistcoat that served two purposes – it held the recording gear, and it enabled the children to give consent for us to undertake the recording with them. When they were happy to wear the waistcoat we followed them, when they took it off (or went to the washroom) we ceased recording. (Carr, Smith, Duncan, Jones, Lee & Marshall, *Learning in the Making*. Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, 2010). This enabled the children to have control over their participation, irrespective of the adults' prior consents on their behalf (Figure One).

2. It's Your Choice. A book to help children decide if they want to take part in a study about what it is like for young children to be sick. A colleague, Dr. Paul Watson, researching children's experiences of being sick, developed a picture book to enable children to understand the process that they would be consenting to. This model has been taken up by many others in New Zealand since, and has been an effective support for children who are given the tools to make real choices about their involvement in research (in addition to parental consent). (Figure Two).



Figure One: Children with research waistcoats

Figure Two: The picture book
for young children by Paul Watson



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

It's Your Choice has been written in order to help you talk with your child about taking part in my study about what it is like for young children to be ill. You will not find a lot of detail about

Conclusion

It is not enough to gather parent consent, or child participation without ensuring that both the research and the procedures around consent are in keeping with UNCROC. Consent must be gained from children – no matter what their age – and the challenge for the researcher and parents is to ensure that children's views are communicated and respected. Research must do no harm!

THE END DOES NOT JUSTIFY
THE MEANS!

the research in this book. Preschool children are not ready for detailed discussions about research. They are ready, however to learn how to make decisions about sharing their time and their experiences with others and how to communicate those decisions to others.

Thus I encourage you not just to play the tape and / or read this book to your child but to share the book together. You may find it useful to stop and discuss issues as they come up. *It's Your Choice* points out to children that their view of what happens to them is special. This is a deliberate strategy because children often try to please adults by providing the answers they think the adult wants. For this study it is important for me to find out your child's understanding of what it is like to be ill.

When you have finished reading *It's Your Choice* and talking about the research with your child please let me know your child's decision.
Kind regards

Paul Watson

Some of the participants at the Conference did not have the opportunity to make a presentation due to time constraints. Below we publish their contributions.

Bibliography – An Academic Approach to Korczak's Legacy

First of all, let me share my excitement on my very first book as a co-editor and co-author. I sincerely appreciate having had the opportunity to participate and contribute to such a unique project as *Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources, 1939 – 2012* which I am going to introduce you.

This book is a result of intensive international collaboration of specialists from different fields but highly motivated and dedicated Korczakians. As Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo mentioned in her foreword *Polish Speaking Janusz Korczak Speaks English*: “Although we didn't know each other closely or in some cases – at all, what formed a bridge in common was a deep admiration for Korczak.”

Now I would like to share some thoughts on both the process and the result of having had created this bibliography. It was an interesting, exciting but also a difficult and time-consuming process. Along with the academic skills which serve to synthesize material from different sources, verify and structure it, the work on this publication required a number of technical skills from the editors such as proofreading, consulting on design and every minor piece of the layout as well as choosing the paper quality and weight.

As mentioned on the back cover of the book, this is the first Janusz Korczak English bibliography. Indeed, this publication is the one and only. At first, the fact, that there was no single academic English bibliography on this author known so well around the world, seemed impossible. However, during our research Olga



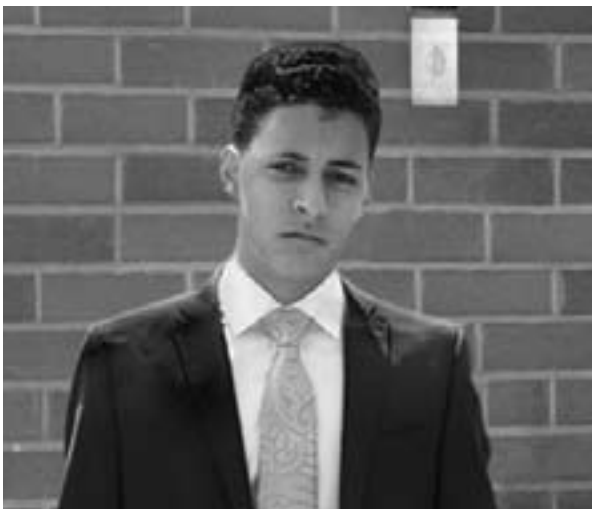
Presented by Dr. Galina Sanaeva, an independent scholar, a member of the Board of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

and I discovered a bibliography by Joseph Buckley published in a rare periodical *Studies on Bibliography and Booklore* in 1976. We were intrigued since this was a chance to find a previously published bibliography on Korczak in English. Omitting the details of what sounds almost like detective story about how this periodical was found, we finally got the original of Buckley's work. I must admit that we were disappointed finding multilingual non-systemized material from which we could borrow only few sources. Thus, the publication I am introducing to you today is indeed the first bibliography on Korczak in the English language.

An analysis of the compiled bibliography, could be an interesting project by itself which would highlight the existing trend in Korczak studies. Summarizing the reflections on the *Bibliography*, it is worth mentioning a lack of works on the literary aspect of Korczak's books. Certainly, the majority of works on Korczak are dedicated to the Holocaust, Jewish heritage, historical context, Korczak's biography, and general pedagogical studies. Just a few studies present the modern perspective of Korczak's legacy, practical psychology and socio-

logy. Moreover, there are still many Korczak's works not being translated into English and it would be great to have at least another volume of his *Selected Works* besides the existing one in Jerzy Bachrach's translation (1967). Our newest publication *Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources, 1939 – 2012* was planned as just a modest contribution into Korczak's studies. However, we hope that it will provide a fresh look on Korczak's life and legacy in the English-speaking countries. ■

The Misunderstood & Taken for Granted



Presented by Yakov Medvedev, a 12th Grade Student at St. George's High School in Vancouver

Communication between parents and children or, if you wish, between generations has always been difficult, as the old and the young may not see eye to eye on everything. Countless pieces, be they artistic or academic, have been written, documenting this miscommunication. What is common to all these books however, is that they have all been written by adults. And

so, there aren't as many works that really show what children feel. Janusz Korczak, on the other hand, strove to do the opposite. He always captured the sentiments of children, and put their perspectives on display. I would like to take after Korczak, and shed some light on the points of view of children, based on what I have observed around me in my seventeen years.

It is widely perceived that the inexperience of children is the root for all difficulties that they encounter. In plain English, because they have not been faced with certain situations they simply do not have the prior knowledge or foresight required to overcome particular issues. However, not all troubles experienced by children are of their own doing. What I have noticed is that another contributing factor to the woes of children is that not only children burden adults – it is the other way around as well. It is often stated in a cliché way, that the children of today are the adults of tomorrow; and while they do inherit all that is good in the world, it also means they inherit all that is vile and dysfunctional as well. Having said that, wouldn't it be better to teach adults how to properly communicate with children and not only focusing on

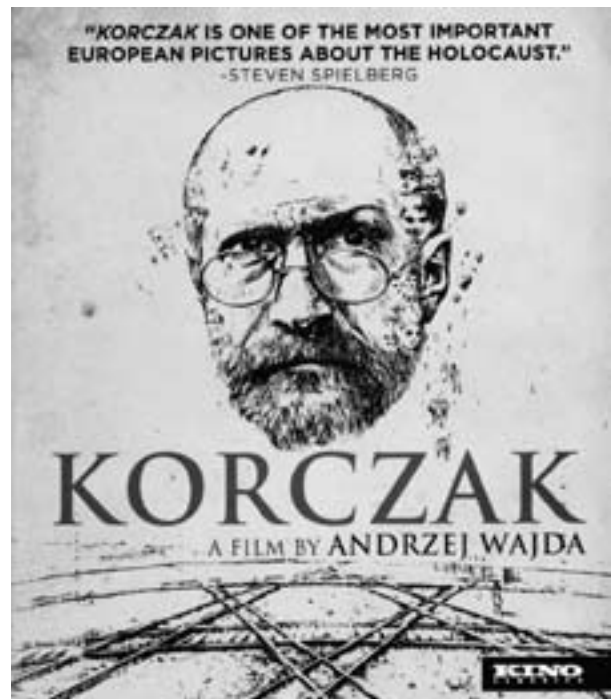
memorizing bullet points of children's rights? In other words, I believe that instead of learning the specific freedoms that are needed for children (those should be learned without saying), more time and effort should be applied to actually educating adults how to raise their children. Throughout my years in high school, I have met students who carry certain burdens with them. Many of these come from parents. Without even knowing it, parents pile on hardships onto their kids. But children are very sensitive beings! This is why I would like to see change and first of all for parents to stop forcing their unfulfilled aspirations, and passing down stresses and failure onto their children.

Adults were all once children themselves, but as a result of human nature, people tend to forget the past and get too caught up in the present. Imagine if all adults remembered what it was like being young. That way, they would be able to interact with children so much more effectively. However, this is not reality. It seems as if parents today would rather supply their children with goals instead of letting them explore and encounter new experiences on their own. If this way of thinking were to change, children everywhere would feel much more fulfilled and understood.

Dear adults, please do read Korczak's book *The Child's Right to Respect!*



From October 22 through November 8, 2012 selected posters from the exhibit of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's *Janusz Korczak and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto* were on display in the lobby of the Scarfe Building of the Department of Education of the University of British Columbia.



Korczak's Day at the University of British Columbia was completed with the movie *Korczak* by Andrzej Wajda which was shown to the participants of the Conference.



Media Coverage

Zachor/Remember, a Bulletin of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, published an article *The Life and Work of Dr. Janusz Korczak* by Lillian Boraks-Nemetz in its fall issue of 2012. In the article the author briefly presented Korczak's life and work, quoting some of his famous statements such as "a country's health can be determined by the well-being of its children." The author invited the readers to participate in the conference *Janusz Korczak: His Legacy and Children's Rights* to be held at UBC on November 2, 2012.

On November 23, 2012, Vancouver newspaper *Jewish Independent* published a lengthy article *An Educational Legacy. Association Marks the Year of Janusz Korczak*. The article includes interviews with Jerry Nussbaum and Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo conducted by Cynthia Ramsay.

Here are some excerpts from this article.

Being asked about the bronze-relief sculpture *Janusz Korczak and his Children*, Jerry Nussbaum explained: "The bas-relief was an initiative of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, with many sponsors... [and it] is the first and only commemorative statue of Korczak in North America. [...] The Association decided to donate the bas-relief [...] to the Faculty [of Education of UBC]. We were trying to find a proper way to celebrate the extraordinary educator and the children's rights advocate. At the same time, we were looking for ways to promote an interest in the legacy of J. Korczak amongst the members of the Faculty of Education, undergraduate and graduate students and, of course, as broad an audience as possible.



From left to right: Gina Dimant, Co-Founder and Board member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, Krzysztof Czaplak, Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Vancouver, Kazimierz Brusilo, Chairman of the Canadian-Polish Congress. District British Columbia

[...]

Mr. Nussbaum said: "Our Association organizes a range of projects, from an international exhibition of children's drawings, through material support for several orphanages in Eastern Europe, to many public lectures presented by distinguished guests from Canada, Europe, Israel and the United States." He also added, it "publishes an extensive periodical, the only Korczak-related English-language publication in the world. Our latest projects include the publication of the Bibliography of Korczak's works; the publication of the book *May Their Lot Be Lighter...* by one of our Board members, Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo; showing the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre exhibit *Korczak and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto* at Regent College; and co-organization of the conference and the unveiling of Korczak's bas-relief... The two major sponsors of the conference were the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland, led by the Consul General, Mr. Krzysztof Czaplak, and Ms. Nina Krieger, Executive Director of the VHEC."



From left to right: Irena Wroblewska, Member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, Dr. Anna M. Kindler, Vice Provost of UBC, Prof. James Anglin, University of Victoria



From left to right: Jerry Nussbaum, the Chairman of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, Andrzej Wroblewski, Board Member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

Answering to the question on her passion about Korczak's heritage, Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo said that her professional interest in Polish-Jewish culture led her to Janusz Korczak: "Henryk Goldszmit grew into the famous Janusz Korczak on the rich soil of Polish culture and, at the same time, he himself made the Polish culture grow bigger. He was an inseparable part of the assimilated Jewish Warsaw – the city that filled up his heart and that was filled up with his presence. Being Jewish myself, it was interesting for me how other Jews who are (or were) a part of the cultural landscape in the countries where they live, form their identity."

[...]

Being asked about her recent publication – a book *May Their Lot be Lighter ... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil* and its protagonist Leon Gluzman of Ottawa, Medvedeva-Nathoo said that she became aware of Gluzman when she visited the Janusz Korczak Archives at Beit Lohamei Hagetaot (Ghetto Fighter's Museum) in Israel in the late 1980s. There, she came across the postcards that Gluzman had donated to the archives. "I was impressed by the fact of how

children had praised little gifts that they would receive from Korczak," she said. "On the other hand, I was amazed by the fact of how effectively a simple postcard with Korczak's writing on it worked as a pedagogical tool at the Home for Orphans. I thought that one day I should come back to this topic." Many years passed. When Medvedeva-Nathoo moved to Canada, she recalled that Gluzman resided in Ottawa. "I decided to meet him and to learn from him, firsthand, how children had lived at the Home for Orphans. I was eager to learn more not about a bookish or legendary Old Doctor but Korczak alive – and where could I seize this opportunity? Unbelievable – in Canada! Then, it was just a matter of taking a flight from Vancouver to Ottawa", she concluded.

The extensive material – double page with lots of pictures – about the Association's activities by Iwona Haskins appeared in *Gazeta Informacyjna*. No. 917 January 26, 2013. In Polish.

Photos on p. 3-5, 7-8, 10, 16, 23, 27, 42, 43 by Mirosław Kuras.



Annual General Meeting of the Association 2012

Reported By Galina Sanaeva

The Annual General Meeting of members and supporters of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada took place at the Holocaust Education Centre in Vancouver on January 22, 2012. The meeting was held in an open format that allowed participants to share ideas and opinions on proposals and plans presented by Board members.

In his speech, Jerry Nussbaum, the Chairman of the Association, focused on the fact that our organization was going to celebrate 2012 as the Year of Janusz Korczak. Then he reviewed the projects conducted over the past year, such as hosting David Smith, a writer and children's rights' advocate.

The Chairman also reported on his visit to Israel and the meeting with Batia Gilad, the President of the International Korczak Association, as well as Miriam Akavia, an Israeli author, 2008 Association guest, and also former Korczak's pupils – Itzhak Belfer and Shlomo Nadel. In Sweden, Jerry Nussbaum visited Roman Wroblewski, a well-known Swedish Korczakian. In Poland the Chairman met Prof. Jadwiga Binczycka, a renowned pedagogue who was the President of the Janusz Korczak Association of Poland for many years; Prof. Binczycka was a guest speaker in Vancouver in 2010. Jerry Nussbaum also visited a singer, Slawa Przybylska, known for her amazing interpretation of Polish and Yiddish songs as well as Marta Ciesielska, the Director of the Centre for Documentation and Research. Jerry shared his impression of meeting with the Ombudsman for Children's Rights, Marek Michalak. At the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan,

Jerry met with the Chancellor of the University, the Vice Chancellor, the Dean of the Department of Education, and with the Director of the University Press. Also, the Janusz Korczak Association members learned that the Adam Mickiewicz University would unveil a sister bronze-relief – *Janusz Korczak and His Children*, of which the identical copy was to be installed at the Department of Education at the University of British Columbia.

Jerry Nussbaum announced a plan to organize a Korczak Conference at UBC that will be accompanied with the unveiling of the bronze-relief and presentation of the book *May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil* written by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo. The book publication was to be a joint project of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and the Adam Mickiewicz University.

The Chairman also shared plans regarding the possibility of nominating Janusz Korczak for an Honorary Member of the Canadian Pediatric Society.

In addition, Jerry Nussbaum introduced new Board members of the Association: Prof. Andrzej Wroblewski and Dr. Galina Sanaeva, and a new member of the Editorial Board of the Newsletter – Yakov Medvedev, a student of St. George's High School in Vancouver. All proposals received majority support.

Malgorzata Burczycka shared the plan of the Association to support the project by *Popular*

Theatre in Vancouver in the stage production of *King Matt*. The Association had facilitated a relationship between *Popular Theatre* and the *Chutzpa! Festival of Jewish Performing Arts*, which hosted the production.

Iwona Haskins suggested to sponsor tickets for the *King Matt* performance by *Popular Theatre* for children from low-income families and foster homes including Aboriginal children.

Yakov Medvedev presented the latest issue of the Newsletter of the Association.

Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, the Editor in Chief of the Newsletter, emphasized the unique contribution of our bulletin as the only English language periodical on Korczak in the world.

In conclusion, Dr. Galina Sanaeva was introduced to the Association members as a Treasurer of the Association and the Membership Administrator. Then, she presented a new updated version of the Membership Application that is also available online. Galina welcomed all members and supporters to volunteer for the upcoming events dedicated to celebration the Year of Janusz Korczak.



Moving Forward

Presented by Yakov Medvedev

Dear Korczakians,

I am here today as a new member of our Newsletter Editorial Board. I'd like to thank you all for letting me take this position – it is a great honour.

In my hands, I have the newest issue of the annual Korczak magazine. Before we go any further, I'd like to mention that this Newsletter would never have come into existence had it not been for the huge support of the Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Krzysztof Czapla. Mr. Czapla, we greatly appreciate your help.

The very first issue of our magazine came out in 2002. There were 12 pages in it. Since then, the Newsletter has evolved. This becomes fairly obvious when one takes a look at the most recent 64-page edition.

All sections from the original 2002 journal remain but the following have grown. For example, we originally only wrote about events that took place in Vancouver; now we also cover happenings in Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal.

The section entitled *Korczak's Traces in Canada* contains stories about Canadians who once were residents of Korczak's Home for Orphans.

In the section called *Korczak's Legacy*, we publish Korczak's works in English, so that we make our readers more familiar with the ideas of this great educator.

In *How People Remember Korczak*, we print memoirs of those who knew Korczak or were inspired by him.

There is also the section called *New Books about Korczak*, in which we inform our readership



about recently published books on Korczak. We hope that it will help develop interest in his works and the books will be promoted and translated into English.

Finally, the section *Janusz Korczak Worldwide* covers Korczak related activities on a global scale.

It is worth mentioning that now we have many more contributors among whom – this I'd like to emphasize – there are the young members of the Association. For instance, in the latest issue of the Newsletter we have a material dedicated to a Korczak school project.

Before, the Editorial Board initiated most of the articles. Today, we have quite a few individuals who are offering unique information for publishing.

Previously, we rarely received any feedback. Now, we get it regularly. Our readers show their interest in the topics covered and their appreciation for the work done by a small group of volunteers who edit the journal.

All in all, we have something to be happy about. Over the last decade we have made great strides in spreading awareness about our Association, and through the Newsletter in particular. We are proud to say this is the only bulletin dedicated to Korczak in English published in hard copy form and sent to about 30 countries.

At the same time, all issues of the Newsletter are available online. They are posted on website januszkorczak.ca. This further broadens our readership.

However, we still have much more to do. A crucial problem is that a Canadian child is not 'a frequent guest' on the pages of our

journal. This is not right indeed – for we are living in a society full of children of various backgrounds with lots of challenges, and yet we dwell on the past. Meanwhile children are everywhere – at school, at work, outdoors, and you observe their behavior, you hear what they are saying, you see them crying or laughing, some of them happy and some unhappy...

Dear friends, we are looking forward to your participation. Please put your observations on paper, and send your notes to us.

We also need to expand our reach: To print more hard copies as some of our readers want to bring our journal to their schools or other institutions to share them with their peers.

And now, I will touch on the subject that was inevitable: In order to publish the Newsletter financing is essential. Please donate towards this unique publication.

As the youngest member of the Association, and on behalf of the entire Editorial Board, I urge you all to share with us your ideas about how to make our journal more relevant for today's state of affairs and more appealing for the audience. With your help, our journal will keep up with the problems of the modern society and child's position in it. We will be able to carry out more of our goals: to make an impact on children's education and defense of children's rights.

Together we will be able to transform our *Newsletter* into a real journal about children. I wish that it would happen earlier rather than later.

Thank you very much.



Honourary Membership for Janusz Korczak

Compiled by Galina Sanaeva

The British Columbia Pediatric Society granted an Honourary Membership to Janusz Korczak (Dr. Henryk Goldszmit).

The nomination of Korczak for this prestigious award was a result of persistent long-term effort by respected pediatrician Dr. Zenon Cieslak (New Westminster, British Columbia).

Dr. Joanna Rotecka, a Vancouver pediatrician and member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, delivered a speech at the Annual General Meeting of the Society in November 2012, emphasizing the importance of Korczak's legacy. She summarized that the contribution of Polish educator and physician to pediatrics has been immense, and that Korczak's heritage is often overshadowed by his tragic death in the Nazi extermination camp in Treblinka along with children from his Orphanage.

Presenting Janusz Korczak's background, Dr. Rotecka underlined that one of Korczak's



Dr. Joanna Rotecka

interests was the child's right to a healthy environment, which "included love and respect." Indeed, Janusz Korczak taught that children need to be fully understood, and in order to achieve understanding, we need to explore their spirit, their world, and their psychology. Dr. Rotecka also added, "although this holistic approach to children's health is the norm today, it was a revolutionary concept during Korczak's time."

Finally, Dr. Joanna Rotecka highlighted Korczak's contribution to children's rights issues: "A pioneer in the development of international recognition of children's rights, Korczak was one of the original signatories to the declaration, which would later become the League of Nations' Child Welfare Charter in 1924. Over the years Charter evolved and became the UN Convention of the Right of the Child, which came into force in September 1990."

Source: *BC Pediatric Society Newsletter*.
December 2012.



Dr. Zenon Cieslak

Dr. Janusz Korczak and His Legacy

By Martha J. Ignaszewski, Kevin Lichtenstein, Maya Ignaszewski



We are happy to introduce a group of students who are pursuing their careers in medicine and have shown an interest in such a moral authority as Dr. Henryk Goldszmit whose well known literary pseudonym is Janusz Korczak.

Martha J. Ignaszewski is a final year medical student at the Jagiellonian University Medical College in Krakow, Poland. She will be pursuing a residency in Pediatrics, fighting for the health and voice of children following in her idol, Janusz Korczak's, footsteps.

Dr. Kevin M. Lichtenstein graduated from Brighton Sussex Medical School, in the United Kingdom, in 2013, after receiving his BSc degree at Acadia University, NS, Canada. He is presently in a surgical residency training program at the University of British Columbia and hopes to possibly pursue a career in Pediatric Heart Surgery.

Maya Ignaszewski is a medical student in her final year at the Medical University of Warsaw, Poland. Whichever medical specialty she ultimately pursues, she will advocate on behalf of children everywhere.

What amazed us was that even at an early stage of their medical careers, they clearly understood that medicine and ethics are inseparable.

A testament to this is a motto the authors chose for their article: "Everyone makes so much of Korczak's last decision to go with the children to the train. But his whole life was made up of moral decisions. The decision to become a children's doctor. The decision to give up a full-time medical practice and writing career to take care of poor orphans. The decision to go with the Jewish orphans to the ghetto. As for that last decision to go with the children to Treblinka, it was part of his nature. It was who he was. He wouldn't understand why we are making so much of it today." – Misha, Jewish teacher who trained with Janusz Korczak [1].

We wish the young authors the most successful professional life.

This article previously appeared under the section The Good Doctor in British Columbia Medical Journal (BCMJ) Vol. 55, No. 2, March 2013, page(s) 108-110. Below we publish this article in a slightly abridged version.

Editors

Janusz Korczak was a pediatrician, author, and philanthropist who was a champion for human rights and especially for the amelioration of the living conditions of impoverished children. He devoted his entire life [...] to bringing happiness to the lives of children through his novels, the central themes of which revolved around children in need. Throughout his life, medical practice in Poland, and in evacuation centres in Harbin, Tao'an Xian during the Russo-Japanese war 1905–1906, he led discourses and lectures on the state of public health and child rearing, and he influenced the improvement of social practices and instructive methods. [...] His biggest legacy is that his teachings continue to permeate society and influence educational practice. Today, there are active Korczak institutions around the world, and his philosophies on education, health care, and social issues have been recognized by the world [...]. In 1978, for the commemoration of the centenary of Korczak's birth, he was made an honorary fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and that year was declared the Year of Janusz Korczak by UNESCO. More recently, the year 2012 was declared the Year of Janusz Korczak by the government of Poland. [2]

[...]

Born Henryk Goldszmit, Korczak did not change his name because of anti-Semitism. [...] He took the name of the main character of one of Polish writer Jozef Ignacy Kraszewski's books [...], randomly chosen by a young author as his pseudonym. As a doctor he always remained Dr. Goldszmit. Whether he should be presented and perceived as Jewish or Polish seems less relevant (he was both, a Polish citizen of Jewish roots), and he is remembered in history as Janusz Korczak, the name he had chosen for his own privacy, as an author of the books and publications.

Early life

Korczak was born into a prominent Jewish family in Warsaw, Poland, in 1878. After the death

of his father, Korczak “learned at a young age that children are not always respected by adults or given the physical and psychological space to flourish.” [3] The environment of his upbringing instilled in him a great humility and sensitivity to social problems — during his youth he demonstrated an interest in science, psychology, and education, and indeed the psychology of education, which he began to explore through literary works. Korczak wrote his first pieces while still at school.

During Korczak's medical studies at the University of Warsaw, beginning in 1898/1899, he was involved in many progressive social groups wherein he derided “all manifestations of evil, unfairness, and injustice” [4] and spoke out against poverty, unemployment, and social inequality. In fact, it was during his medical studies in Warsaw that Korczak worked as a tutor at children's summer camps and in this way he often had contact with the poor.

Maturing as a physician

After completing his medical studies in 1905, Korczak was mobilized to the Russo-Japanese front where he was forced to treat casualties under extreme circumstances. Later, during the First World War, Korczak once again experienced the horrors of war, working as a ward head in a field hospital in Ukraine. It was in Kiev that these war-torn and gravely injured children made a profound impression on him. It is probable that these early experiences paved Korczak's future, first as a pediatrician and later as an advocate for children's rights. Influenced by the difficulties of war, Korczak began condemning the brutality of war in articles that described the struggles of physicians and medics on the front and commented on social issues rampant during wartime.

Developing a unique social and pedagogical program

Korczak traveled throughout Europe to further his medical education; he also gave lectures on the condition of public health while emphasizing



ing the importance of sanitary living conditions, good hygiene, and the crucial role these commonly overlooked practices played in the normal physical and psychological development of children. In works such as *Scales for Infants in Private Practice* and *On the Importance of Breast-feeding*, Korczak's approaches to infant and youth health care were widely disseminated, published in celebrated medical journals, and generally accepted in the medical community.

During his travels, Korczak demonstrated an enhanced interest in the psychology of education and became familiar with the works of J. H. Pestalozzi, a Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer (1746 – 1827). He was further influenced by the educational theories of the period, namely the ideas brought forth by the New Education Movement: the progressive philosophy that the approach to education must be holistic and involve disparate elements, including human dignity, social welfare, justice, trust, mutual respect, morality, emotional, and spiritual learning, economics, and health, mixing conventional didactic with practical teaching methods.

These principles were rooted in the belief that children are people that are not so different from adults, as well as the rising awareness of children's rights and their contributing societal role. Borrowing heavily from the principles of Pestalozzi, Friedrich Fröebel, and Rousseau, and the ideas explored by Tolstoy in many of his essays, Korczak developed his own social and pedagogical program: "Children are not future people, because they are people already ... whose souls contain the seeds of all those thoughts and emotions that we possess ... [and] as [they] develop, their growth must be gently directed." [5]

His views that "children should be fully understood ... must be respected and loved, treated as partners and friends ... [and that] one ought

to behave towards [each child as] a respected, thinking and feeling human being" [2] are considered an integral component of the modern approach to social pedagogy.

Implementing the new program

Korczak began to implement his ideas in summer camps for children, experimenting with educational relationships as a partnership rather than the previous traditional model with the teacher as the definitive authority figure. He firmed up his theories and ideology on the treatment of children in an academic setting and continued to explore the inter-pupil, and pupil-educator relationships in the orphanage he established and became director of in 1912, called Dom Sierot in Warsaw. There, Korczak implemented a system of self-checks, regulatory bodies, and a student-led court that dealt sentences to rule breakers.

Korczak learned to "[speak] not to the children but with the children" and crystallized his knowledge of child psychology. It was during his time at the orphanage that Korczak published his now famous manifesto "How to Love a Child" on children's rights, in which he stipulates that "children can only function well if provided with appropriate living conditions." [2] Korczak provided the children of the orphanage with a climate conducive to educational furtherment. His pedagogical thoughts and philosophy are further elaborated on in "The Child's Right to Respect."

With time Korczak began to write for children, and sometimes the charges he cared for in the orphanage were placed in main character roles of his novels. Stories such as *King Matt the First*, *King Matt on a Desert Island*, and *Little Jack's Bankruptcy* explored the needs and difficult circumstances of poor children. "Korczak belong[ed] to [the] unique group of writers who were most at home in the company of the children for whom they created their stories." [1] He often used fic-

tion to break down the challenging topics that were central motifs in his works to prepare his young readers for the demands of real life.

Life in Nazi-occupied Poland

Korczak remained loyal to the orphaned children [...] after the 1939 invasion of Poland by the Nazis. There [in the ghetto] he fought to maintain a semblance of dignity and a home-feel for the children.

Because of Korczak's righteousness and illustrious popularity with the citizens of Poland, he was offered sanctuary many times on the Aryan side. Remaining true to his ideals, Korczak boarded the train from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka extermination camp with nearly 200 children of the orphanage.

[...]

Korczak's legacy

Janusz Korczak was a multifaceted personality whose ideas have transcended the boundaries of time. "As a result, his life work is still influencing the development of pedagogical thought and educational practice..." He devoted his life to putting smiles on children's faces and ... to making adults better people. He was ever faithful to his conviction that "our strongest bond with life is the child's open and radiant smile." He also left future generations with a challenge: "It is inadmissible to leave the world as one finds it." [2]

Unfortunately, despite the lessons taught by Korczak, "genocide throughout the 20th century remained one of the most prevalent forms of preventable mortality and morbidity for children." [6] We, as physicians (and people), must ensure that Korczak's message continues to be heard and permeates society so that the global mistreatment and killing of children ends.

[...]

In 1924, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child was passed by the League of Nations; the principles stipulated in that document were later passed into international law in 1989 by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that the "best interest of the child" is not overlooked. "The essential themes of UN-CRC include the right to the basic needs for optimal growth and development; civil and political rights; and a right to safety and protection. The UN CRC is the first legally binding international document to recognize the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of the child." [7]

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The Story That Must Be Told

Compiled by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo

An exhibit *Janusz Korczak and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto*, mounted by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre with participation of our Association, was on display at the Lookout Gallery, located at Regent College of the University of British Columbia from September 19 to October 19, 2012.

At the opening of the exhibit Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo gave a speech about Korczak's life. She also presented the audience with three books, published by, or with strong support of our Association. These were *May Their Lot Be Lighter...* by O. Medvedeva-Nathoo, *Poems* by Richard Mirabel, and *Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources* edited by O. Medvedeva-Nathoo and G. Sanaeva.

In her speech Olga said: "What would be the best gift one can give to Korczak if not a book? We know he was a champion of children's rights, a popular physician, and a great educator. But whoever he was during the day, when he entered his tiny room in the attic of the Home for Orphans at night, doctor Goldszmit became Janusz Korczak. He, no doubt, being tired after a long hours of work, caught his second wind and became a writer.

"I think, first and foremost, he was a writer – after all, he started publishing at the age of 18 and put his pen aside only one day before the deportation to the Nazi Treblinka death camp.

"So, three books published by our Association are our gifts to the Year of Janusz Korczak."

Shortly after the exhibit opening ceremony, Olga received a letter from Ms. Kit Schindell that read:

Dear Ms. Medvedeva-Nathoo

[...]

I am 65 now. When I was about eleven I was living in the Kootenays, and at the library I found a book called *I Survived Hitler's Ovens*. This would be about 1957. I read the book, horrified. Of course not one word of the carnage of the Holocaust had been taught in schools or mentioned in our homes. I returned to the library hungry for more information. I read everything on this atrocity that was available.

In 1960, our family moved to Vancouver and [...] I attended Churchill High School. [...] The Jewish [...] kids were nearly all wealthy. I made friends with many of them, and I understood why these teenagers were given expensive gifts [...]. Many of their parents had escaped with their very lives and certainly had no childhood of their own. Many years later, I was a director at St. Vincent's Hospital, and many of these same parents, now elderly, were my patients. Many had terrible memories. I found myself explaining to my young Gentile staff why our Jewish patients were experiencing such fearful memories.

As I grew older, my interest in and love for the Jewish people [...] has never left me. [...] Their stories MUST be told. I appreciate all your work.

God bless you.

Kit Schindell



King Matt the First Reigned in Vancouver

By Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo

On June 17, 2012, my friends and I took part in a charity event organized by Popular Theatre (*Teatr Popularny*), a dynamic Polish community-founded semi-professional group of performers. As soon as we stepped onto the grounds of the British Columbia Children's Hospital, young volunteers received us. Those boys and girls in bright toques, topped by King Matt's paper crown, greeted us with a question that warmed our hearts: "Do you have an audience with King Matt?" Then, they directed us to the Auditorium Building where the performance, based on the beloved book of our childhood – Janusz Korczak's *King Matt*, was about to begin. The wonderful story was to be presented on stage to the young patients of the Hospital.

But let's start from the very beginning...

Few months earlier *King Matt* was performed by Popular Theatre during the festival *Chutzpah!* – The Lisa Nemetz International Showcase of Jewish Performing Arts. The performance (in English with Polish subtitles) took place at the Norman & Annette Rothstein Theatre at the Greater Vancouver Jewish Community Centre.

In the programme of the festival *King Matt* was advertised as "a play for all generations." It was also described as "a moving fable that follows the adventures of young boy who is catapulted to the throne by the sudden death of his father, and sets about reforming his kingdom according to his own ideas and dreams. Ignoring his grown-up ministers, he decrees that children should have merry-go-rounds at school and chocolate cake every day.

"Matt has many adventures, fights battles, braves the jungle and crosses the desert – but perhaps



King Matt the First Poster.
Designed by Elzbieta Wiernio

the most life-altering thing of all is that the lonely boy-king finds true friends. This timeless tale [it was published in 1923] shows that only through the honesty and spontaneity of children can grown-ups imagine and create a better world."

Teatr Popularny of Canadian-Polish Society *Pro Arte* presented *King Matt* in a stage adaptation by the well-known Polish director Julia Wernio. The play was translated into English

Theatre

"Wry and touching, King Matt is a fable that offers a fierce, truthful picture of children struggling to make sense of grown-up nonsense . . ." Maurice Sendak

"His message is still relevant today, that children matter . . ." Tom Alford

A co-presentation of Chutzpah!
and Popular Theatre-Canadian-Polish Society PRO
King Matt the First (Canada)



Richie Fenrich-Przytocki as King Matt with the actress Elizabeth Kozłowski and the President of the Pro arte Society, producer Andrzej Gajos



In the audience

by Vancouver actor/director Marek Czuma. Music for this production was written by Polish composer, pianist and conductor Piotr Salaber. For the songs, lyrics by the great Polish poets Julian Tuwim and Jan Brzechwa were used, along with original one written by Joanna Kopplinger who was also responsible for the set and

costumes. King Matt's part got Richie Fenrich-Przytocki. Adult characters were played by Richard Kopplinger, Elizabeth Kozłowski, Sylwester Młynarski, Feliks Rohraff, Marek Walczuk and others, all known to fans of the Popular Theatre.

Our Beautiful World

A Lyric by Joanna Kopplinger

Our beautiful world
Has the heart of a child
Needs no cannons or swords
But loves everything wild.

It likes oceans and trees
Sky, stars, moon and sun
Our singing and dancing
And all that what is fun.

Our beautiful world
Has a child's laughing face
When it's happy and smiling
Stars can see it in space.

The world is our home
That we all love and share
Where we ramble and roam
Where we play, love and care.

Our beautiful world
Has the heart of a child
Needs no cannons or swords
But loves everything wild.

Our beautiful world
Has the heart of a child
Needs no cannons or swords
But loves everything wild.



*King Matt at the Rothstein Theatre.
Photo by G. Sanaeva*

Young performers and Joanna Kopplinger



At the time of **Chutzpah! Festival** the exhibit **Janusz Korczak and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto** was on view at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre at Jewish Community Centre which helped the audience better understand Korczak's life and work.

It happened that one good deed led to another.

After seven successful performances between February 29 and March 4, the producer and the President of *Pro Arte*, Andrzej Gajos, together with cast and crew decided to present the play at BC Children's Hospital. The intention was to entertain young patients and to donate all proceeds from the ticket sale and sponsors' contribution to the Hospital Foundation. The organizers explained in the program: "The play is about the adventures of King Matt, it is for adults as well as children. More precisely,

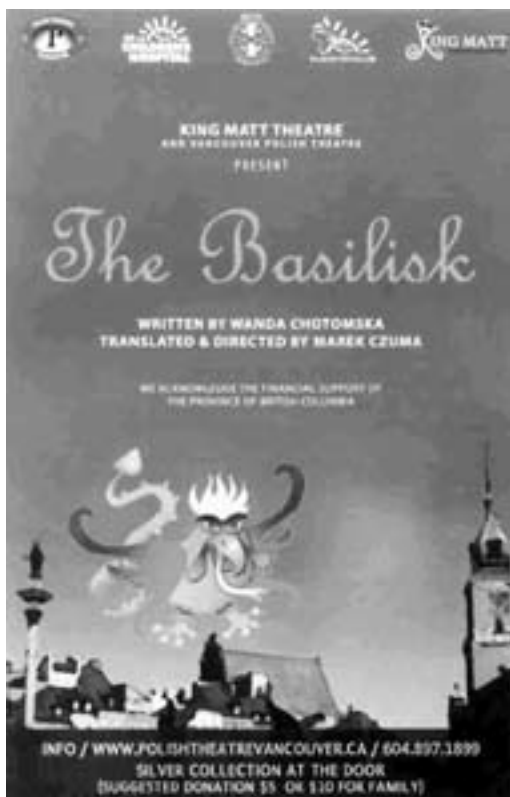
for those adults who have ever dreamed or may still be dreaming about being a king and changing the world for the better, in spite of all difficulties. Children's imagination knows no boundaries. For that, if for no other reason, it's worthwhile never to stop being a child, and never to lose one's naïve view and faith that one can always become a pilot, a fireman, or even a princess.

"This play tells what's most important: The story of how a young person matures as he strives to gain some knowledge of the world through his own efforts, to fight for his motherland as an ordinary soldier, and to comprehend the rules and wisdom of the adult world.

"There is much humour, wit and song in this play. We hope that *King Matt* will help to familiarize Canadians with Janusz Korczak's work and convey his enduring message: 'When children smile, the whole world smiles.'"

Impressed by the charitable work of the Popular Theatre, the Hospital's administration welcomed the performers to make such presentations for the children treated at the hospital every year.

This led to one more good thing: A new creative group was founded – King Matt Theatre, which set a task to support sick children and to familiarize them with theatrical arts. The first premiere of the theatre was a fairy tale *The Basilisk* written by a Polish author Wanda Chotomska and performed at BC Children's Hospital on March 17, 2013.



The Basilisk Poster.

Designed by Joanna Kopplinger



From left to right: Gina Dimant, Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, Yakov Medvedev, Khadim Nathoo.



From left to right: Gina Dimant, Malgorzata Burczycka, Galina Sanaeva

Popular Theatre appreciated the support of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada.

Our Board member, Iwona Haskins organized fundraising in the Polish community and collected means to sponsor 31 children from low-income families and foster homes including Aboriginal kids to attend the play *King Matt*. The fundraising was announced in the Polish-language community newspapers *Takie Zycie* and *Gazeta Informacyjna* as well as at the Polish-language Radio, *Nofa*.

Our Association donated to the Hospital's Library three copies of English translation of Korczak's book *King Matt the First*.

Special thanks from the Popular Theatre go to members and supporters of the Association: Malgorzata Burczycka, Maryla Ignaszewski, Iwona Haskins, Elzbieta Kozar, Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, Jerry Nussbaum, and Barbara Szafnicka.

Media coverage in Polish

Szymanska, T. "Z potrzeby serca." *Takie zycie* June 30 (2012).

Kozar, E. "Piekna akcja charytatywna na rzecz chorych dzieci." *Gazeta Informacyjna* No. 904 July 14, 2012.

Kozar, E. "Słowo redaktora." *Gazeta Informacyjna* No. 920 March 9-16, 2013.

"Warszawski Bazyliszek w BC Children's Hospital." *Takie zycie* March 24, 2013.

Hurko, W. "Wystep charytatywny teatru Krola Maciusia w BC Children's Hospital." *Gazeta Informacyjna* March 30, 2013.

Performance **King Matt** is available on DVD.
Please call Joanna Kopplinger 1 604 596 4238.



Article Published in *National Post* Ignited Discussion across Canada and Comment Related to Janusz Korczak

Compiled by Galina Sanaeva

The article titled *They Had a Conscience* published in *The National Post* on November 7, 2011 presented an overview of the research conducted by a professor of history at the University of Toronto, Doris Bergen. Prof. Bergen is a daughter of ethnic Germans from Ukraine and Mennonites settled in Saskatchewan. She was writing a book about an important role that German chaplains played during WWII. The main point of her book is the story that took place in Ukraine in 1941.

Charles Lewis, an author of *National Post* article, describes: “The Germans had just broken the non-aggression pact with Stalin and had rolled into the Soviet Union hell-bent on global domination. In a small town a special Nazi killing squad arrived and proceeded to kill all the Jewish adults. But they were not sure what to do with the 90 or so children – so they placed the youngsters into a school until someone could figure out their fate. They were locked inside for several days without food or water. Then, two Wehrmacht soldiers heard the anguished cries coming from the school and felt moved to help.

“So they went to the two chaplains and the soldiers told them you have to do something about this,” said Prof. Bergen. “The chaplains went to the military commander and asked if the children could be released. Eventually, the commander radioed to Berlin to find out what they should do and they were told the kids were to be killed. And so the children were killed.”

Charles Lewis continued: “For Prof. Bergen, the people in this story that grabbed her attention

were the military chaplains and the role they played not just in this incident but throughout the war. More to the point, she wanted to understand how often well-intentioned men of God inadvertently helped facilitate the Nazi horror.”

“I’m an historian, not a judge,” said Prof. Bergen. “It’s not my job to say they deserve to go to heaven, they deserve to go to hell. I’m not interested in that. [Studying this] you are forced to think that these were people who were just ordinary, like most of us. In that sense I’m trying to get beyond the judgment that they should have done this or they could have done that.”

Lewis added: “As her research revealed, the chaplains who served the Wehrmacht during the war were not hard-core Nazis, and nor were they party members. They were, she said, a part of the German mainstream – the kind of character who could offend no one but at the same time give the war effort a stamp of legitimacy and boost morale. In an odd way, she said, they facilitated the horror.”

On November 7, 2011, *National Post* published a comment on article about Doris Bergman’s research. Steven Scheffer from Burlington, Ont. titled his comment *Don’t just blame the Nazis*:

“I found it troubling several years ago that the guide at Dachau kept referring only to the guilt of Nazis, not mainstream Germans, in the Holocaust. She even made the point that despite the presence of a crematorium at Dachau, no cremations took place lest

the people of Munich wonder where all the smoke was coming from.

“It is difficult to accept that with the millions of German soldiers and bureaucrats involved and with the large numbers of people disappearing overnight, that German citizens knew nothing of what was going on. If the chaplains were part of the German mainstream as history professor Doris Bergen suggests, they all knew only too well.

“Prof. Bergen is attempting to understand the facilitation of the Holocaust by German chaplains. If I honk my horn at someone tossing a cigarette butt out of the car window but do nothing else that is facilitation with some conscience. On the other hand, the cowardly failure of the German chaplains and citizenry to put a definitive end to the murder of children was irrefutable complicity with no conscience at all.”

On November 9, 2011, *National Post* published a comment on Steven Scheffer’s reaction by Roy Engfield, Ottawa:

“Letter-writer Steven Scheffer is correct; there were few Germans who did not know of, or at least wonder about, the bloody deeds of the Nazi regime. He is perhaps right to call those who did not act “cowardly.” And it can be assumed that many had enormous conflicts of conscience, and many did risk – and lose – their lives in the effort to do something. But there is one question I would put to Mr. Scheffer: What would he have done under the circumstances then prevailing in Nazi-controlled Germany? It is easy to condemn, but difficult to do better. The disappearing persons in Germany could include anybody. It is impossible for us today to imagine the security apparatus that was deployed, and just how effective and efficient it was. We are all human, and we all love our lives, and if another goes away and does

not come back – we shrug our shoulders. How many people would do more in these circumstances?”

On November 10, 2011 *National Post* published a comment on Roy Engfield’s comment by Rosalind Russell from Vancouver:

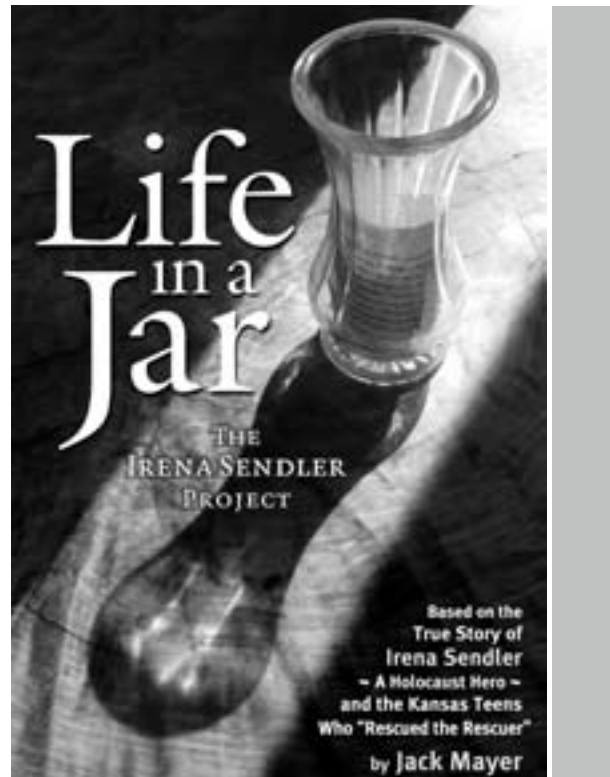
“Unlike Roy Engfield’s letter that we not be so quick to judge others, I am not in the least reluctant to judge those Christian Chaplains who contacted German headquarters for advice on what to do with those Jewish orphaned children. Apparently, they had no trouble in complying with the advice to kill the children. Their relationship with the Divine One gives them an entree into the spiritual world that few of us can even relate to, and I would have imagined therefore that it would have been easy for them to have been able to make a decision about the lives of the orphaned children *without* having to go to their superiors for advice on what to do. I suggest, that in the interest of salving their own conscience, they, like Eichmann and his ilk, abrogated their Christian responsibility and deferred to their superiors regarding the lives of the innocent children with the excuse that they were ‘only carrying out orders.’

“My admiration is instead devoted to the likes of Dr. Janusz Korczak, a physician, poet, writer of children’s stories, and resident-in-charge of a Jewish Orphanage who refused freedom and stayed with the nearly 200 children in his care when they were being sent to the extermination camp. All perished, although Dr. Korczak was offered an escape, he had not accepted it [...] But he was a man of conscience and decency, and he chose to die with the children in his care.”



A Monument to Irena Sendler (Sendlerowa) to Be Erected in Poland

By Galina Sanaeva



Members of the Janusz Korczak Association have collected a substantial sum of money towards a monument to Irena Sendler that will be erected in the city of Otwock (Poland) where she grew up. The money has been transferred to the Irena Sendler Monument Building Committee account.

Irena Sendler (1910 – 2008) was born to a Polish Catholic family of Dr. Krzyzanowski. Sendler was expelled from the Warsaw University, when she opposed the discrimination against Jews, known as the “ghetto-bench system.” She served in the Polish Underground during World War II and worked as a nurse, while cooperating with social services. During the Holocaust,

serving as a head of the children’s section of the underground resistance organization *Zegota* in German-occupied Warsaw, Irena Sendler saved about 2500 Jewish children.

In 1965, Yad Vashem Museum recognized Irena Sendler as Righteous Among the Nations.

The life and deeds of Irena Sendler have inspired many books and films, including the movie *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler* (2009) by Canadian-American director John Kent Harrison, and a student theatre production at Kansas School, called *Life in a Jar*. ■

Annual General Meeting of the Association 2013

The Annual General Meeting of Members and Supporters of our Association was held at Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture on April 14, 2013. A guest-speaker Dr. Art Hister,

an award-winning physician, educator and media personality, gave a talk about children's health issues.

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Vancouver



From left: Chairman of our Association Jerry Nussbaum, Ambassador Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz, Dr. Mark Edwards, UBC

In March 2013, the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz and the Consul General Krzysztof Czaplak visited the Faculty of Education of the University of British Columbia.

The Ambassador and the Consul met with the Associate Dean, professor Mark Edwards and other members of the Faculty. Prof. Edwards related about the accomplishments of the Faculty of Education and the University at large. The focal point of the visit was the presentation of the bronze-relief donated to the Faculty by the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. The Ambassador and the Consul met with Jerry Nussbaum, the Chairman of the Association. The Ambassador expressed his interest in the various endeavors of the Association, and in particular the projects that had been realized in 2012, the Year of Janusz Korczak. Both, the Ambassador and the Consul, pledged a continuing support for the Association.



The International Holocaust Remembrance Day



On occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Vancouver Russian Jewish Seniors Society MOST – BRIDGE organized a lecture *Janusz Korczak and Children – the Victims of the Persecution of the Jews by the Nazis* delivered by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo. The presentation in Russian language took place at Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture on February 2, 2013. Information about the lecture was published in *Most – Bridge Bulletin* in March 2013.

Award to Mrs. Gina Dimant, a Co-Founder and the Board Member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

The Government of the Republic of Poland awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland to Mrs. Longina Dimant for her contribution to the development of good relationships between Polish and Jewish people.

The Chancellery of Honours announced that the Government of Canada had approved the award to Mrs. Longina Dimant.



Award to Mrs. Zofia Lewicka-Pezowicz, a New Member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

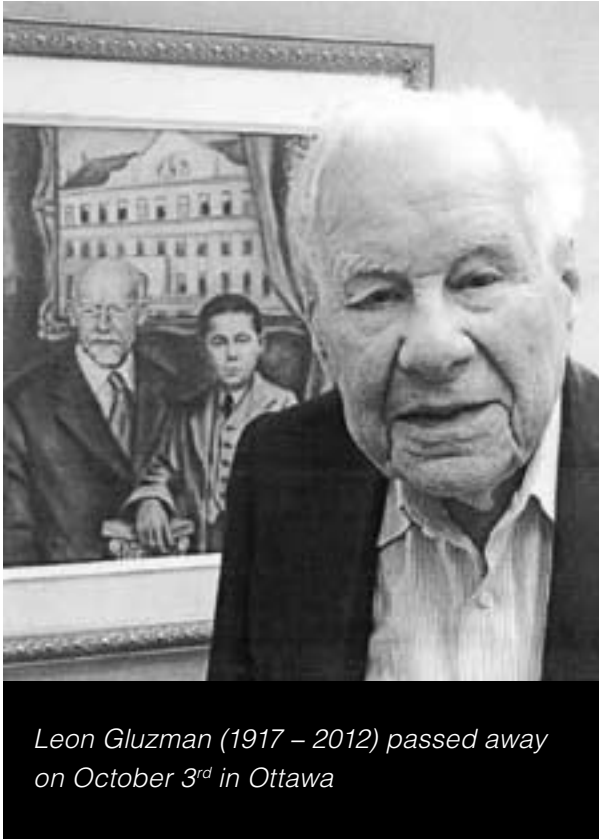


The Government of the Republic of Poland awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta to Mrs. Zofia Lewicka-Pezowicz for her outstanding contribution to the democratic changes in Poland and active participation in students' protests in March 1968, defending human rights and civil freedom.

The Chancellery of Honours announced that the Government of Canada had approved the award to Mrs. Zofia Lewicka-Pezowicz.

The Award ceremony took place at the Consulate of the Republic of Poland on May 3, 2012.

OUR CONGRATULATIONS!



Leon Gluzman (1917 – 2012) passed away on October 3rd in Ottawa

Leon was born in Warsaw, Poland. When he was six years old his father died. His mother left without a means to fend for her family. She contacted the Home for Orphans. Leon was accepted. He lived at the Home from 1923 to 1930. Later, he said: “The Home for Orphans shaped my life and decided my fate.”



At the age of 13, Leon immigrated to Canada. He took with him 28 commemorative Post-Cards signed by Korczak that once were given to him at the Home for his accomplishments. It is Leon who saved for us the largest to date collection of these documents that have a particular significance in the history of the Home for Orphans, and for Korczak’s pedagogy.

In Canada Leon started a new life. In due course he grew into a prosperous businessman. In his city, he was known as a generous philanthropist.

Leon never thought twice about working hard to popularize the name and deeds of Janusz Korczak. He cherished the memory of Korczak’s words: “Farewell, in your memory let us dwell.”

One of the most important events of the late years of his life was a play *The Children’s Republic* staged in Ottawa in 2009. Leon played a significant part off stage.

Leon was a protagonist of the book *May Their Lot be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil* by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, which was published by the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland in cooperation with our Association in 2012.

Leon Gluzman was one of the last surviving Korczak’s children.

We express our deepest condolences to Leon’s family.

The Janusz Korczak Association of Canada





Paul Heller (1911 – 2013) passed away on February 5th in Vancouver.

Paul was born in Poland. Before the Second World War, he escaped via Hungary to England where he studied engineering. Then, together with his wife Edwina he settled in Canada: firstly, in Montreal, later in Vancouver.

Paul was a successful businessman known for his long time involvement with the Vancouver Jewish community. He was a Honorary Chairman of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and a board member of many other local organizations. He was also a generous supporter of various cultural initiatives, a philanthropist, and a patron of the arts. Everyone who once visited Paul Heller, surely remembers his warm and caring personality and his house filled with music.

We express our deepest condolences to Paul's family.

The Janusz Korczak Association of Canada ■



Dr. Ludwik Mirabel (1917 – 2012) passed away on September 30th in Vancouver.

Dr. Mirabel, a cardiologist, belonged to an ever-shrinking group of people who knew Janusz Korczak personally.

Before the Second World War, he was one of the young contributors to *Maly Przegląd* (The Little Review), a unique newspaper founded by Korczak and written for children by children. In 1933, 16-year-old Ludwik conducted an interview with Janusz Korczak – *Three Quarters with Korczak* (Trzy kwadransy z Korczakiem). After 74 years, in 2007, his own translation of this interview was published in our Newsletter along with his Conversations with the Editor, titled *You see what you are doing to me – you make me dig in the ashes.*

Shortly before this publication, Dr. Mirabel delivered a talk *The Promised Land of Maly Przegląd* for members and supporters of our Association at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. It was a memorable event.

Up to the last days of his life Ludwik Mirabel lived according to his motto – “Life may be tragic at times but it is not consistently serious.”

We express our heartfelt condolences to Ludwik's family.

The Janusz Korczak Association of Canada ■

Three Books Dedicated to Janusz Korczak

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Janusz Korczak's Home for Orphans, our Association published three books which, in one way or the other, are dedicated to our mentor. These are:

May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo. Poznan: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza/Poznan University Press, 2012. In Polish and English. Translated from the Polish by Richard J. Reisner. Design Helena Oszmianska. 253 pages.

Poems by Richard Mirabel. Selected and edited by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and Richard J. Reisner. Introduction by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo. Design and typeset by Sergey Belinsky. Vancouver: K & O Harbour, 2012. 132 pages.

Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources, 1939 – 2012. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo & Galina Sanaeva (Eds.). Based on material compiled by Edyta Januszewska (Poland) & Daniel Berek (USA). Revised and updated by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo & Galina Sanaeva. Introduction by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo. Design and typeset by Sergey Belinsky. Vancouver: K & O Harbour, 2012. Published under the auspices of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. 88 pages.

All proceeds of sales of these books will go to upcoming charity projects conducted by the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada.

Below we present some materials from the book

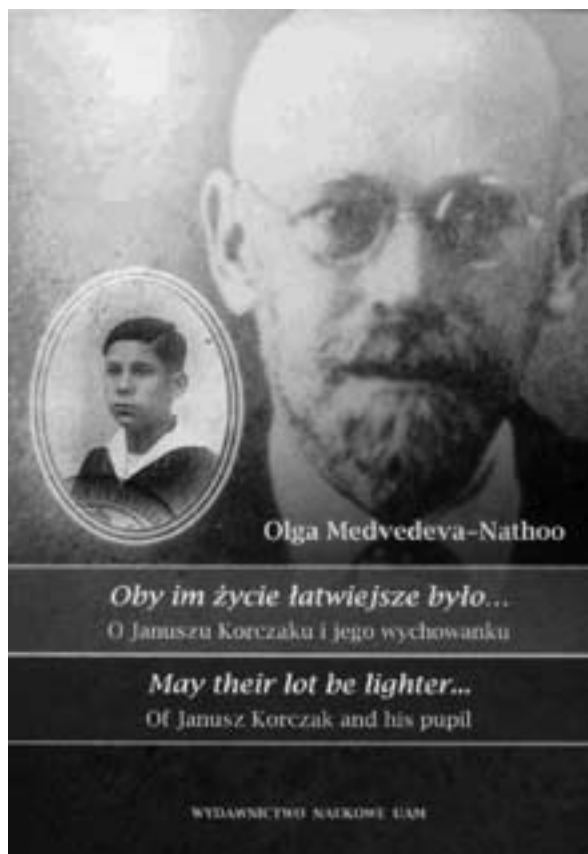
May Their Lot Be Lighter...

From **Foreword**

By Prof. Bronislaw Marciniak, Chancellor of the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan, Poland

[...]

For Adam Mickiewicz University, there is no present and future without the past. A sense of History for its decision makers and its academic community as a whole is an important axiom of reference, as well as a compass point for reflection and the daily labour of educating the next generation. The past continues to bequeath unto Adam Mickiewicz University a series of values and wisdoms, without which it would be difficult to preserve the University's excellence that illumines all before it.



It is therefore with great enthusiasm and a sense of deep satisfaction that as Chancellor of AMU, I undertook the initiative of publishing Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo's book *May Their Lot Be Lighter. Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil*. This is a superb book, a record of putting into practice the great vision of a righteous person and renowned Polish educator, Janusz Korczak. It is a book that in a unique way has preserved for good, an important, moving and illuminating fragment of history. It is also a book about a young boy, the growth of his sense of being and the extraordinarily wise, humanistic pedagogy that supported a child's development and its rights, which Janusz Korczak set into train and realised among others, at the Home for Orphans.

The book is written in a masterful hand and its author has the unique ability to grasp the relations between the grand vision of Korczak's pedagogy and the daily routine of a young boy, and his growing sense of identity. The reproduction of postcards and photographs received by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo from her protagonist Leon Gluzman, a pupil at the Home for Orphans, gives the reader an unforgettable opportunity to be at one with an unceasing, living history. This book also convinces us in a very obvious way, how relevant the pedagogy of Janusz Korczak is, now in the 21st century.

From *The Living Ties*

Introduction by Jerry Nussbaum, Chairman of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

[...]

For the past several years Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo has devoted herself to the subject of *Retracing Korczak's footsteps in Canada*. She has managed to find people who were tied to Korczak before the war, among others: his pupils, correspondents with the *Nasz Przegląd*

(*Our Review*) newspaper Friday supplement, *Maly Przegląd* (*The Little Review*), and the families of sponsors who gave financial support to the Home for Orphans.

One of Korczak's pupils who was discovered, Leon Gluzman, settled in Canada in 1930 and it is he who is the main protagonist of this book. Leon's personal history for us acts as a bridge spanning the world between the wars when Korczak was active and the world we know today. The book therefore not only helps us enter the realm of the Home for Orphans and Korczak, it also links these two realities. Moreover, it helps make palpable the living ties between history and the present day, as well as underscoring the universal values of Korczak's philosophy and pedagogy, which remain so equally applicable in our time.

Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo's research continues to inspire us to seek new horizons in our work as righteous citizens, in the spirit of Janusz Korczak.

From the author's note *About Leon Gluzman*

The wide range of publications [...] by Janusz Korczak [...] amount to 20 imposing volumes of his *Works*. No doubt, equally impressive – if a collection were possible – would be the biographies of all those who were directly influenced by Korczak: colleagues, students, fellow workers, the 'faithful' and of course, all 'his' children. The children of the Jewish poor who passed through the doors of the Home for Orphans run by Korczak (1912 – 1942), as well as the Polish (non-Jewish) children from the Our Home orphanage, where he worked (1919 – 1935).

The Canadian businessman and philanthropist Leon Gluzman is one of the above children (1923 – 1930 at the Home for Orphans) [whose] life [is] outlined against the background of the 20th century and its tumultuous events.

[...]

The biographical accounts are illustrated with precious archival memorabilia. Thus for the first time, the largest to date personal collection of Commemorative Postcards and photographs, which Leon Gluzman received at the Home for Orphans, is published in its entirety. These documents, in Korczak’s pedagogy, have a particular significance.

*Below we publish some excerpts from three chapters of the book **May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil** by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo.*

Farewell

[...]



Commemorative Postcard of Health. On the reverse Korczak wrote: “B. Gluzman in 1928 – measure of growth – 11 ctm [cm]. Warsaw 21/III [1]929”. Leon Gluzman Collection. Ghetto Fighter’s Museum. Israel

In March 1929, Korczak wrote out another postcard to Leon – for growing 11 centimetres in the past year. This was the so-called Postcard of Health. These postcards were awarded to those that didn’t suffer from ailments, grew quickly and played sport. As a doctor, Korczak fully appreciated the effort of children in developing their growth and maturity (one of his themes being the “hard work of growing”).

The Commemorative Postcard of Health that Leon received features a still life with vegetables – an entirely readable allusion. Exactly a year later, Leon turned 13 and was faced with a difficult choice. The Home for Orphans regulations stated: “When a child turns 13 the family is invited for a talk and informed that perhaps this is the child’s last year in the shelter.”

[...]

[Leon] left the Home for Orphans before the end of the school year in March [1930]. We do not know whether this was so because he had turned 13 in March. Perhaps his mother had other plans for him? [...] After his Bar Mitzvah (ceremony marking the start of adulthood and religious maturity at 13), the boy was considered an adult, fit for a voyage to distant lands, and to make his own decisions in life.

In 1919, Korczak addressed the children leaving the Home for Orphans with his *Farewell*. The text was placed in the weekly newsletter and later published in the press. It is not known whether this was repeated every year, though it is possible that Leon was familiar with the words:

“We bid farewell all those who have already left or are about to do so for good.

We bid them farewell on the eve of a long and distant journey, and this Journey – Life itself.

Many a time we have laboured in our minds how to say farewell, what good advice to give.

Janusz Korczak with his pupils in summer camp Goclawek, 1927. Leon is in the front row, first from the left. Leon Gluzman Collection. Ottawa



*Alas, words are but poor mortals who are weak.
We have nothing to offer.
We do not offer God, for it is you who has to seek
Him out, in your own self and in private labour.
We do not offer a heart for Country, it is you who
has to seek it out, in the labour of your love and
convictions.
We do not offer love, for there can be no love without
forgiveness, and to forgive is a labour of love – each
must undertake in their own self.
We offer one thing and one thing only: a burning
longing for a better life, as yet unknown but soon to be
made familiar – as long as Truth and Justice do live.
Perhaps it is this burning longing that shall light the
way to God, Country and Love.*

Farewell, in your memory let us dwell."

In fact, it is not important whether Leon was familiar with this text or not – he had the good fortune to experience this untypical form of education first hand in the presence of the Doctor. This is proved again by Leon's affirmation: "Doctor Goldszmit changed my life and sowed the seed of hope for a better future".

In the meantime, at his mother's home, preparations were in place for Leon's departure.

Departure

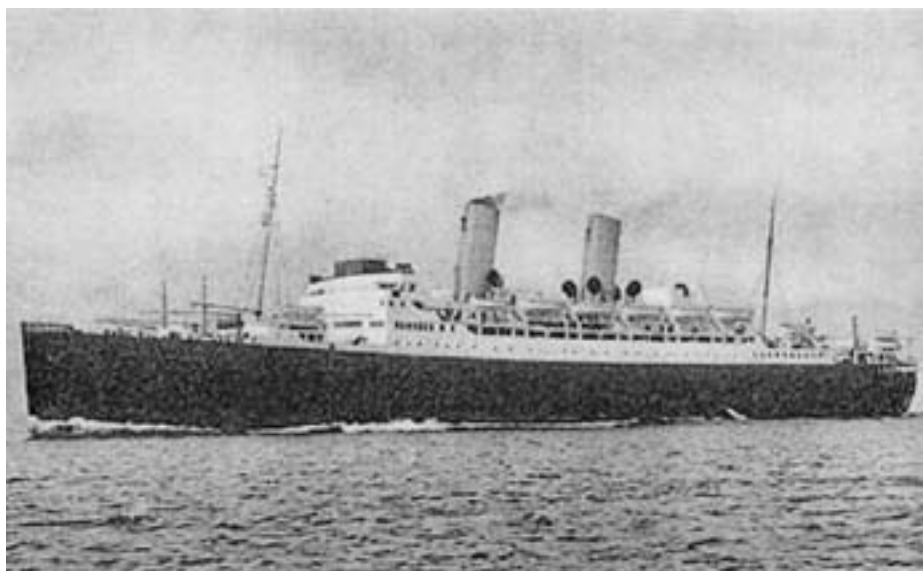
His mother and sister saw Leon off. From Ostrowska St. they took the tram to the Gdansk railway station in Warsaw. Leon's mother had trouble keeping back her tears. She reassured herself – after all her son is now grown up, and at the same time contradicted herself: 'He's still a child though, my baby...'

They said their goodbyes.

Leon travelled to the port city of Gdansk on his own.

[...]

From Gdansk to Canada the journey by sea took Leon through the port of Liverpool. The passenger transatlantic ocean liner, *Duchess of York*, was new, gleaming – having been launched only a year ago. No doubt, Leon sailed in the cheapest class where the ship's rocking might have been difficult to bear. How difficult the Atlantic can be, especially in autumn and winter, anyone who has ventured can testify. Is it not for nothing, for this very reason that at times because of the wild rocking on the seas, this liner was known as the *Drunken Duchess*?



The ocean liner,
Duchess of York,
on which Leon sailed
to Canada in 1930.
Wikipedia

Leon had his fair share of experiences on board the *Duchess*. On the journey which took several weeks, he no doubt, came to know other passengers who also lived in hope for a better life in the New World. From Poland to North America in the inter-war period hundreds of thousands of people migrated, many in fact to Canada. They departed in search of earning 'a crust'. Leon probably should have been familiar with the book by Henryk Sienkiewicz, dealing with this very subject *Za chlebem* (*For happier shores*) – though the sad fate of its main characters probably did not weigh on the young boy's mind. Leon was not overly troubled in advance. Romantic visions towered over any sober thoughts of reality.

On the journey, as his mother had instructed, Leon studied English conscientiously – learning the words and phrases, one by one, off by heart. It is most likely that his mother bought the dictionary [the small phrase book the size of his hand that was constantly by his side] for him when she made arrangements for his passage to Canada at the office of Canadian Pacific Railways on Marszalkowska St. in Warsaw – which organized travel to North America.

[...]

On the cover of the dictionary Leon wrote in pencil – almost like in a diary – the date 9/XI/1930. The inscription on grey paper, after more than 80 years is barely legible. This could be in fact the day the ship set sail from Polish shores.

The custom of writing down events at the Home for Orphans – where on an open shelf there always laid notebooks for children to use – has remained with him. On this Korczak wrote: "One child would write down the prettier songs, another jokes, others puzzles, yet others dreams; a notebook of fights or quarrels, late-comings, damages and lost objects. There were also texts edited by children such as daily bulletins, monthly magazines devoted to nature, travel, literature and politics."

[...]

On the back cover of the dictionary there was a passage in Polish: "Upon landing in Canada, passengers are greeted by a representative from the Department of Colonisation and Development, Canadian Pacific Railway Association. The

English-Polish
dictionary. Leon's first
'textbook' of English.
Leon Gluzman
Collection. Ottawa



representative shall come on board and provide free information and advice to passengers, so as to help them in their forward journey. [...] After disembarking the representative of the Department of Colonisation and Development, Canadian Pacific Railway Association can be found in his office at the port 'IMMIGRATION HALL'."

Leon would have certainly followed this instruction.

In the Canadian Archives, Passenger Lists of migrants from Europe to Canada for the period 1865 – 1935 are kept. [...] One such contains the following information:

Name: Lejb-Beer Gluzman

Gender: Male

Age: 16

Estimated birth year: abt 1914

Birth Country: Poland

Date of Arrival: 28 November 1930

Vessel: Duchess of York

Port of Arrival: St John, New Brunswick

Port of Departure: Liverpool, England.

In summer, passenger ships usual set anchor in Quebec, in winter though – either in Nova Sco-

tia or in New Brunswick. Leon arrived in New Brunswick, to be exact, in Saint John at the end of November. It is almost certain it rained that day – November in New Brunswick is when the most rain falls during the year. Then from St John it was necessary to get to Ottawa, where his uncle, whom he didn't know, lived.

[...]

Of course Leon would not have felt sure of himself in the new surroundings but there was no turning back now.

According to the statistics, in Poland in 1930, 3,051 people of Jewish faith departed for other shores. Let us assume for a moment that the last of these was the boy from the Home for Orphans, Berl Gluzman, who now set foot on terra firma Canada, as a migrant.

War

The Luftwaffe was already bombing Warsaw. Leon was following the events with great anxiety. On September 28, 1939, the newspaper *The Ottawa Evening Citizen* on the front page had the title: Associated Press, *Radio Station in*



Canada
Passenger List.
1930. Library and
Archives Canada

Warsaw Has Ended Its Epic Story. Budapest, Sept. 28. – Except for strange, sputtered signals, the wavelength of the Warsaw radio was silent today. [...] Its last message, broadcast at 3 p.m. yesterday, was a new challenge to the besiegers: “We will never give in while one of us is alive”. But last night the Polish Telegraph Agency carried a dispatch from Warsaw, which indicated the defence of the Polish capital had been abandoned. German announcements said the city had capitulated unconditionally and would surrender formally tomorrow.

There is no doubt this must have been a very troublesome day for Leon. The first of over 2,000 days when waiting for news of Poland and his family, was his life’s constant companion. It was with dread that he turned the radio on and opened the newspaper – that was the case until the very last day of this appalling war. Leon understood full well, as did many others, what this war meant for Jews. Although the scale of the catastrophe at that time no one could envisage.

[...]

The fate of his family weighed constantly on his mind. There was no way to help – Jews

from Europe in vain tried to find a way to enter Canada. Letters from home stopped coming. Leon decided to enquire about his family in the office of the International Red Cross in Geneva. He gave the names of his mother and sister – Gluzman, Golda and Sara and their address before the war: Warsaw, Nowolipki 26/26. He made no mention of his step-father; maybe because there was no space left on the form (the information given could not exceed 25 words). On February 8, 1940, Leon received a reply: ‘Levine, Gluzman, Dreszman Family are well. Sala got married’. ‘Sala got married’, Leon reflected – ‘that means people believe everything will turn out ok’. That was the last contact, though an indirect one, with his family in Warsaw.

[...]

In 1939, correspondence from the Home for Orphans stopped coming. Finally, after a long silence in late autumn 1941 a postcard came. Not at all like those Korczak had once given him... Grey, shrouded in gloom, written on a typewriter. Maybe Korczak was afraid that the Germans wouldn’t be able to decipher his handwriting and the postcard wouldn’t be sent. After all, it

Postcard sent to Leon from Janusz Korczak and Stefania Wilczynska from the Warsaw Ghetto, September 1941. Leon Gluzman Collection. Ghetto Fighters' Museum. Israel



was known that all the correspondence during the German occupation was censored. This postcard was sent from the Ghetto, a place closer to death than anywhere else. Two stamps from September 12, 1941: 'Judenrat (Jewish Council) Warschau' on the left, 'Warschau' on the right. The Reich Post sign, an eagle with an evil swastika in its claws, right over the name of the addressee, fortunately out of reach for the Nazis.

*The Home for Orphans
92 Krochmalna
now 33 Chlodna*

*Dearest Leon!
We ask, as far as it's possible for you, to send some food parcels to the Home for Orphans, Warsaw, 33 Chlodna, for those children ailing (weaker, recovering after illness). Please inform the others, who still remember their childhood years.
Sincere regards.
Goldszmit (Korczak) and Stefa.*

The postcard written on September 10, 1941, as already mentioned, finally reached Ottawa in November and was addressed in a rather peculiar way:



*Mr. Leon Gluzman
257 Rochester Street
Ottawa On.
U.S.A./America über Lissabon*

The postcard could not be addressed directly to Ottawa because Canada was at war with Germany. Correspondence therefore to Canada as a 'country not allied' was impossible. The postcard thus journeyed circuitously through Lisbon and USA.

This particular postcard shows the mechanisms of how the post office functioned in the Ghetto. All correspondence exclusively passed through the Judenrat, where a special post office functioned.

The Judenrat would buy from the occupational powers postage stamps according to the set price. Only two languages were permitted, Polish and German. Letters that were written in Yiddish or Hebrew were destroyed. From the start of the Massive Deportations, July 1942, all the correspondence in and out of the Ghetto, went through the control of the Germans, who were reluctant to pass it on. It is well known that at the turn of 1943 there were piles and piles of unsent and undelivered letters.

Among these could have been a letter from Leon Gluzman.

To the question whether he managed to send food parcels to the Home for Orphans, Leon cannot give a clear reply. Does he not remember? So many years have passed... Did he not have the means? What might have proved a hurdle for Leon to respond to Korczak's plea?

If he hadn't managed to send a parcel before the end of 1941, then by the beginning of 1942 he would have faced difficulties – in Canada food ration cards were introduced for some products. This could have therefore meant

substantial obstacles in putting together a food parcel. It is also possible that at the post office, parcels were not accepted that were destined for the enemy 'Generalgouvernement'. What the facts of the matter were, it is impossible to establish. One thing can be said for certain – those in the Ghetto could receive such help only until December 1941. In Korczak's case it was rather late. Too late – although Leon could not have known this at the time.

Leon did not receive any more news about his mother. Both mother and sister [...] disappeared without trace. [...] If Golda Gluzman-Dreszman waited in a queue for death at the Umschlagplatz in Warsaw, so near the Gdansk Railway Station, she would have probably thought of her son, where she saw him for the last time and thanked the difficult decision she took, sending her boy all that way across the ocean, which in fact saved his life.

The fate of Korczak, Wilczynska and their pupils is something Leon only found out after the war. Knowing how attached Leon was to the Doctor and Stefania Wilczynska, it could be said that he lost his parents twice over. After the death of Korczak and Stefania, Leon became a true orphan.

The ocean liner *Duchess of York*, on which Leon made his passage to Canada in 1930, was at the start of the war adapted to the defence needs of the allies – one example being Canadian soldiers transported to Great Britain. In 1943 this ship was attacked by the Germans from the air near the shores of Spain. Engulfed in flames it might have attracted German U-boats and there was no choice but to make sure it sank.

Once upon a time this gracious liner brought Leon to the New World – from the past to the future. Now it lay deep at the bottom of the sea.

The knot with the past was cut forever. ■

We are happy to inform our readers that Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo received a letter of appreciation from the First Lady of the Republic of Poland, Mrs. Anna Komorowska. It reads:

Warsaw
March 13, 2012

Dear Madam,

I have received from Minister Marek Michalak, your valuable book about Janusz Korczak and one of his pupils *May Their Lot Be Lighter...* published by the Adam Mickiewicz University Press in Poznan.

As a Chairwoman of the Honourary Committee of the Celebration of the Year of Janusz Korczak, I am very glad that the book came out in this particular year.

I wish you all the best in your future projects and personal life.

Respectfully,

Anna Komorowska

Excerpts from the review by Dr. Zbigniew Rudnicki, published in Polish in ***Studia Edukacyjne*** Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM w Poznaniu/***Educational Studies***, Poznan University Press No 20, 2012, p. 299-302.

With the passage of time, less and less people are around who knew Korczak and witnessed the events of that ever distant past. This is why Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo's idea to record recollections of one of the last of Korczak's pupils, Leon Gluzman, is of so much importance.

[...]

The author chose an original way of carrying out her concept: by presenting the educator through the eyes of a child. It seems, at least in the initial chapters of the book, that Leon's story [...] is used just as a pretext for showing Korczak's fascinating ideas and fruitful educational tools.

[...]

Besides Leon's oral testimonies, the author made use of various archives: a private collection of the protagonist of the book as well as collections of the Centre of Research and Documentation – *Korczakianum* in Warsaw, Janusz Korczak's Archives at the Ghetto Fighter's Museum in Israel, and Canadian Archives and Library in Ottawa. [...] Using the information from these sources the author created a vivid image of everyday life at the Orphanage and Janusz Korczak – the portrayal without any retouching. In turn, the reader became acquainted with a very busy person: a writer, a lecturer, a fundraiser, etc. But above all else, with a man who made everything possible for children in his charge [...] such as providing them with a real Home. [...] The author described the strong ties that had been built between Korczak and his pupils – none of them had any doubts that they were of the utmost importance to the Doctor.

[...]

Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo depicted in detail one of the most original tools of Korczak's educational practice, which was awarding children with the Commemorative Postcards as a sign of their efforts to improve their characters and behaviour [...] She called these postcards the little bowes of memory. Indeed, these cards remained as mementos of children's happy years at the Home for Orphans and reminded them of their bond with the Doctor.



[...]

Leon's successful life [...] was proof that any criticisms of Korczak's so called impractical ways of upbringing children and any accusations that they were unprepared to deal with the trials of the real world upon leaving the Orphanage, had no merit.

[...]

Olga's book is a passionate reading, which rediscovers the uniqueness of Korczak's legacy against the background of life of one of his pupils. Unlike many other authors who are following the fashionable trend of deconstruction forcefully applying this procedure even to these aspects of Korczak's life where there was no room for myths, Olga is not trying to demythologize the great educator. Vice versa, her book is full of warmth, humour and fairness. It is a result of the work of the researcher who is able to understand the documents of the history, engaging intellect and evoking emotions.

Olga's book received 5 star ratings in reviews by Internet bloggers.

One can find information about this book on numerous websites. Most of them are in Polish (for example, by AgataSzwedowicz of Polish Press Agency).

Here are some excerpts from wyrzoneslowami.blogspot.com/.../oby-im-zycie-latwiejsze-bylo... [Originally in Polish. January 6, 2013]

How did Korczak teach his children to develop their positive features that are so much of value in the society and why schools of today are not able to teach kids the same? A book by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo answers this question.

[...]

We assume that the Internet is the most comprehensive source of information about Korczak's life and his pedagogical concept [...] but it turns out that if we want to gain real knowledge we still have to look for it in books.

[...]

The author not only explains Korczak's educational principles, but also helps to better understanding of the situation of national minorities and their assimilation [in Poland before WWII.]

[...]

All in all, the book is a work of historical significance as well as an intriguing tale. It is a pleasant read and when I was nearing the end, I couldn't help but want to see a continuation of this book.

[...]

I would recommend this book to the readers who are interested in history and Korczak's pedagogy. It is a kind of professional reading but without professional jargon. I can assure you that you will not find in it any incomprehensible word.

Here are fragments of the review by Dr. Joop Berding, a Board member of the Janusz Korczak Association in the Netherlands and Vice Secretary General of the International Korczak Association that was posted in www.korczak.nl

I immensely enjoyed reading this book. It gives valuable insights into the life of one of the hundreds and hundreds of children that once lived in JanuszKorczak's orphanage in Warsaw.

[...]

Reading this book brings one back to a vanished world, but also to the essence of democratic, humane living, and the unconditional respect for children.

[...]

Wherever he could, Korczak stressed the positive and good in the pupil's behavior, and in this respect the book is unique in the literature on Korczak.

[...]

I highly recommend this book for both newcomers and those already acquainted with the remarkable world of Korczak.

In 2012 the book *May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil* by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo was also published in Russian.

In the Foreword to this edition, Prof. Roza Valeeva of the University of Kazan and the President of the Janusz Korczak Association of Russia wrote: "This story of one of Korczak's pupils helps us immerse ourselves in the everyday life of the Home for Orphans and to witness tangible results of Korczak's approach to education. With regret, we have to admit that nowadays in most of the institutions of this kind, factors such as inadequate living space, isolation, lack of contact with people from other social circles, as well as [...] too strict control over orphans by educators, [...] put obstacles in their full development as independent people.

[...]

This is one of the reasons that this book is highly useful reading for educators who work



at orphanages and similar establishments as well as for students who want to pursue their career as educators."

On the website *2012 Rok Janusza Korczaka*, a competition was announced. Those who had shown their competence in Korczak related matters were awarded with Olga's book *May Their Lot Be Lighter...*

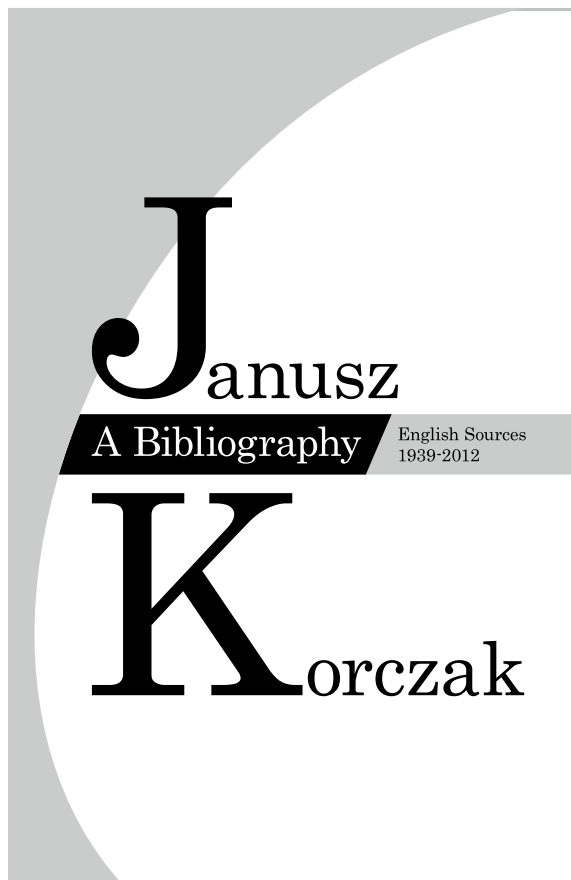
May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo can be purchased through the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. Please e-mail to jkorczaassn@shaw.ca

Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources, 1939 – 2012

Below we publish abridged version of the Introduction to the Bibliography.

Polish Speaking Janusz Korczak Speaks English

By Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo



Janusz Korczak is best known as the author of books for children and about children. These include *King Matt the First* (1923), *How to Love a Child* (1920), and *The Child's Right to Respect* (1928), all of which have been translated into many languages.

[...]

Korczak's philosophy, his belief in the inherent value of a child as a human being, and his pedagogical ideas are of universal and all-time

significance. He 'speaks' to everyone: children and adults, in the West and in the East, in last century and in the present day.

The first publication of Korczak's book in English – an adaptation of his story *Little Jack Goes Bankrupt* (1924) was published under the title *Big Business Billy* in London, in 1939, just before WWII broke out.

After the war, slowly but surely Korczak came to prominence not only for editors but readers as well, especially in the UK and USA. As a testament to his rise in relevance in the English-speaking world, new publications of his works are being produced. His story for children and adults alike, *King Matt* starting from 1945, was published in English at least 12 times; his *Diary* which exists under different names – *Memoirs*, *Ghetto Diary*, *The Warsaw Ghetto Memoires*, *The Ghetto Years* – was released at least 5 times. Another fact that so many editions of Korczak's biography *The King of Children*, written by American author Betty Jean Lifton, have been printed, also attests to the growth of his popularity.

The book *Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources* aims at a dissemination of knowledge about Korczak's life and legacy in the academic community as well as among other professionals such as educators, psychologists, medical doctors, social workers, and lawyers who are specializing in children's rights. Not only this, it can also attract literary critics whose theme of writing is books that mir-

ror children's spirit as well as those who study history of Polish literature at large, and also historians whose topic of research is Polish Jewry in the 20th century. In fact though, Korczak with his versatile talents and extremely broad and energetic activities, could be of interest to a general readership – for all those who are not indifferent to the challenges that a child meets, growing up to adulthood.

The books and articles that are listed in the Bibliography were written or published in English in various countries such as Poland, Israel, USA, UK, Canada, The Netherlands, Russia, Brazil, and Switzerland, between 1939 – 2012.

The team that worked on the Bibliography was international itself. Although we did not know each other closely or in some cases – at all, what formed a bridge in common was a deep admiration for Korczak. It turned out that it is not possible to work on Korczak without putting one's heart into it – even if the goal set is highly academic.

Members of this team are Edyta Januszewska from Poland, Korczak's homeland where his educational heritage is considered as a national treasure; Daniel Berek from the USA where Korczak's fame has just gained momentum, Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and Galina Sanaeva from Canada, who received their literary training in Russia where Korczak is one of the most popular authors among children and parents.

A few words about those who independently from each other had collected the Korczak material that formed the basic body of this Bibliography.

Dr. Edyta Januszewska is an associate professor at the Department of Social Education at the Warsaw Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education. Edyta lives in Poland, far from English Korczak sources but in a very

nourishing environment: the international conferences dedicated to Korczak are regularly held there, the Old Doctor's (as Korczak is known in Poland) legacy is a part of curricula at many Polish Universities, and finally there are colleagues *in situ* with whom Edyta can share her passion for Korczak.

On the other hand, Daniel Berek, a teacher and a free lance writer, lives within arms' reach of English Korczak sources but worked alone on the collection, with no help or moral support from his fellow-educators. What helped him to put together such a huge material was his strong belief in Korczak's pedagogy, reinforced by his own observations of children at school and at home.

It is pertinent to quote what Edyta and Daniel share with us about how Korczak became a part of their profession and life.

Edyta recalls: "The first booklet about Korczak I received from my Polish high school teacher. Later, being a student at the Academy of Special Education I attended professor Jadwiga Binczycka's lectures on Korczak – and they were a revelation. From that time on, Korczak became a constant theme of my studies and a great help to me as an educator."

Influenced by Korczak, and in particular his views on children of war and children's rights, Edyta has found her own path as a pedagogue. She wrote two books: *A. S. Neill: Maturation to Freedom in Education* ("Dojrzewanie do wolności w wychowaniu. Rzecz o A. S. Neillu" Warsaw, 2002) and *The Chechen Child in Poland: Living with Traumas of War as a Refugee* ("Dziecko czeczeńskie w Polsce. Miedzy trauma wojenna a doswiadczeniem uchodźstwa" Torun, 2010.)

Daniel relates: "My supervisor at a school for children with emotional and cognitive needs



recommended me two excellent books by Larry Brentro, president of *Reclaiming Youth International*. While reading these books, *No Disposable Kids* and *Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future*, I kept coming across an unfamiliar name: Janusz Korczak. Who? I did not even know how to pronounce the name! My curiosity led me to the story that most people associate with Korczak, how he refused to abandon the children he cared for in the Warsaw Ghetto and the eyewitness accounts of his final march, leading his charges in a procession of quiet dignity to the *Umschlagplatz*, to board a train to Treblinka.”

This story astounded Daniel. As he put it, he discovered a man “who embodied the love of children, who not only wrote about social justice, but also lived it, giving a voice to those who had none – or at best were not listened to”. Janusz Korczak became a source of inspiration for him, someone with whom he desperately wanted to connect. This intense feeling led him on a quest to research and collect whatever he could find related to Korczak.

In fact, Edyta and Daniel provide us with wonderful examples of how important a Teacher can be in one’s life. Janusz Korczak himself was such a guiding star for his colleagues, students, fellow workers, and of course, his charges from the *Home for Orphans*.

This Bibliography in its present form came to existence due to the intensive work of Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and Dr. Galina Sanaeva whose job was to coordinate two independent collections of material and to revise, update, edit and shape the material according to bibliographical standards.

Last but not least, the publication of this Bibliography was made possible thanks to the strong support of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada.

Let us return to the actual Bibliography.

To the best of our knowledge, most works by Korczak and on Korczak written in English have been taken into account. Most probably however, not all of them, since this Bibliography is not the result of systematic work of the specialized institution but the fruit of the efforts of a few individuals dispersed across the globe.

As one of the obvious gaps, let us mention the lack of description of the English version of the Bulletin of the International Janusz Korczak Association and of the Bulletin of the Janusz Korczak Association of Israel which were published in the 1980’s. Both of these publications contain valuable information but seem to be inaccessible.

A major part of the sources has been verified by editors, some though turned out to be unavailable. In these cases the editors had to rely on secondary sources where the primary source had been mentioned.

The collected material has been classified in two principle chapters: *Writings by Janusz Korczak* and *Writings about Janusz Korczak*. These are supplemented by the Appendix.

The chapter *Writings by Janusz Korczak* contains translations of Korczak’s works published in book form as well as his works that appeared in various periodicals. The latter ones are listed in a separate section.

The original title in Polish and year of the first publication have been placed in square brackets; the names of the translator, author of the introductory note, and editor have been indicated in each entry. The illustrator’s name has been omitted. Instead, in order to help readers



picture Korczak's books, the covers of some have been presented.

The chapter *Writings about Janusz Korczak* consists of six sections.

Section one covers documentary biographies of Janusz Korczak as well as testimonies, diaries and memoirs in which certain pages are dedicated to Korczak. Each entry includes the author's name, title of the book, place and year of edition, as well as publisher.

Section two includes conference proceedings, reports, and lectures on Korczak's legacy.

In section three, articles in scholarly publications and reference books have been listed.

Section four – the largest in the Bibliography, which numbers 117 entries and many more items, if taking into account additional notations placed under the same number – specifies articles in periodicals, magazines, and newspapers. Description of articles includes author name, article title, name of periodical, issue (and volume) number, and page whenever possible.

In section five, books of various genres (prose, poetry, drama) featuring Janusz Korczak have been listed. In some Korczak is presented as the main character and in others, as a secondary personage. Numerous plays featuring Korczak or based on Korczak's stories that had been produced but have not been published yet have been omitted. The media reviews on the plays staged have intentionally not been listed because of their unavailability or focus on performance and not literary quality.

Section six is devoted to online sources, in which only the most reliable and accurate have been chosen for listing.

In the supplementary chapter (Appendix) selected information has been placed, concerning the Korczak exhibits and exhibit catalogues, as well as films and documentaries that have been dedicated to him. Finally, to show our readers the scale of the Worldwide Korczak Movement, websites of the Janusz Korczak Associations (as accessible in September 2012) have been mentioned.

Numerous music pieces and art works dedicated to Korczak, as well as school projects developed by high schools within the context of the Holocaust and Children's Rights programs, have been omitted.

The material in each chapter and section has been arranged in chronological order.

Numbering starts a fresh in every chapter and section. When necessary (more than 3 articles on the particular Korczak topic in one publication), additional numbering has been used. In such cases, entries are arranged according to the order of their appearance in a given publication.

Every new edition of the same book has been arranged as a separate entry with its own number. Taking into account that access to some of the books mentioned in the Bibliography may be difficult, this kind of arrangement can facilitate the search of a required publication.

We hope that this Bibliography will contribute to the development of considerable interest in Korczak's legacy; legacy of the great thinker and one of the greatest moral authorities of our time.

Janusz Korczak fluently spoke Polish, Russian, and German. We believe he soon will be just as 'fluent' in English, consumed and followed by readers around the world.





Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources, 1939 – 2012

“An Essential Addition to the Bookshelf of Every True Korczakian”

Reviewed by James Anglin

For an English-speaking newcomer to the works and life of Janusz Korczak, it can be frustrating trying to locate materials published in English. My own discovery of Korczak’s story, thanks to Dr. Larry Brendtro (whose writings on Korczak are included in this reference), led me to Betty Jean Lifton’s *The King of Children: A Biography of Janusz Korczak*, and to a few articles published in North American journals. But then my reading ground to a halt until last year when a friend emailed me about a copy of the *Selected Works of Janusz Korczak*, edited by Martin Wolins, listed on ebay. To my knowledge, the Wolin’s text is the most comprehensive English translation of Korczak’s writing produced to date. However, there were only about 1,000 copies printed in 1967, and they are both hard to find and quite expensive to purchase when available. It is likely that many of the original copies reside in libraries or are in treasured private collections of Korczakians.

The publication of this new Bibliography by the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada is an important resource and one that deserves wide circulation. I must admit that when I first read through it, I was both excited and a bit overwhelmed by the range and variety of English sources that actually exist.

The editors are careful to give much of the credit for amassing these references to two collectors of Korczak’s work – Dr. Edyta Januszewska (Poland) and Daniel Berek (USA) – who are to be commended for making their references available for this impressive and very useful source-book. At the same time, the editorial work done by Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and Dr. Galina Sanaeva who have taken the raw material and

organized it in exemplary fashion with a meticulousness that gives evidence to the fact that they were indeed “putting [their] heart into it”. (p. 9)

The presentation of the references is well organized, being divided into two major sections: I. Writings by Janusz Korczak and II. Writings about Janusz Korczak. The latter section is further divided into six sub-sections: 1. Books and book chapters (1943 – 2012); 2. Conference proceedings, reports and lectures (1979 – 2012), 3. Scholarly publications and reference books (1964 – 2010); 4. Articles in periodicals, magazines and newspapers (1942 – 2011); 5. Books featuring Janusz Korczak (1957 – 2012), and 6. Online resources.

Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo has written an informative Introduction to the Bibliography which will be especially helpful to newcomers to Korczak, and which sets the tone for the text and offers some contextual background to the creation of this work of love. Anyone familiar with Olga’s work (for example, a book *May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak And His Pupil*) will appreciate the usual fine touches, such as the illustrations taken from book covers and impeccable editing throughout this slim and finely crafted production.

In brief, this is an essential addition to the bookshelf of every true Korczakian, and a resource that will surely be referred to on a regular basis and at important moments of need. ■

Janusz Korczak: A Bibliography – English Sources, 1939 – 2012 can be purchased through the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. Please e-mail to jkorczaassn@shaw.ca

In 2007 issue of our Newsletter, Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo published “hard talks” with Richard Mirabel, a Vancouverite and a former reporter from Korczak’s newspaper **The Little Review**. Richard had shared with Olga his recollections about his work in the gazette and his deeply hidden treasure – his own poetry, which had never been published before. Nine of his poems were presented in that publication. In 2012, five years after Richard’s death, the best of his poetic legacy came off the press in book form, due to kindness of his widow, Petronella Aders-Mirabel. All proceeds of sales of **Poems by Richard Mirabel** go to charity projects conducted by the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. Here is an introduction to Mirabel’s book along with his most defining poems.

The Humble Verse of Richard Mirabel

By Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo

The poet Richard Mirabel (1920 – 2007) never tried to publish his poetry. In fact though, he had been writing poems all his life.

Richard was born in Warsaw, Poland, shortly after the country regained independence and the Great War was just a recent past. The time of his youth was the period between two wars. Later he fought during the Second World War. Indeed, it was his fate to experience the heavy burden of the war first hand.

He acquired his primary literary training while he was working as a reporter for a unique newspaper, *The Little Review* (sometimes translated as *The Children’s Review*; *Maly Przegląd*, 1926 – 1939) founded by an outstanding Polish author and educator, Janusz Korczak. It was a paper written mostly by children for children. Richard was 12 when he started to contribute to this newspaper.

The turning point was 1934 when he came across a notice that shook him to the core. It was about a little boy, who was mortally shot by a railway guard while trying to pinch two lumps of coal from the railroad car. Indignant, Richard wrote a letter to *The Little Review* protesting against this inhuman crime, asking, was a boy’s life worth less than a few pieces of coal?! Next day he received a call from



the editor’s office. The editor Jerzy Abramow (later known under his pen name as the writer Igor Newerly) suggested that he investigate the matter more closely in order to write an article for publication. Shortly after, Abramow offered Richard a job as a secretary to the edi-



torial staff, which the young student eagerly accepted. Richard worked for the newspaper until 1937. He took his task with particular seriousness. For example, when he had an assignment to write about homeless people, he, being a boy from a wealthy family, spent nights with the homeless folk in the street. That made his reportages accurate and appealingly authentic.

The Little Review was Richard's real school of life. It was a school of righteousness: his congenital sensitivity to social injustice was well understood and responded to by his colleagues.

It was also a school of intellectual pursuits and freedom to express his thoughts. In the newspaper Richard struck a friendship with Isaac Deutscher who worked for the newspaper as a proofreader. Deutscher was about twice Richard's age. He was deep minded, an erudite, and a brilliant expert on history; later, in the 1940s – 1960s Deutscher, as a British author, published a political biography of Stalin and the Trotsky Trilogy that specialists consider one of the classics.

Finally, in *The Little Review* Richard was taught respect for the written word and was infused with a strong belief in the power of literature. This was where he started mastering his practical writing skills.

Richard had seen Janusz Korczak, an extremely popular personality of his time, only on a few occasions. But the newspaper, master-minded by that tireless children's rights fighter had never been just an ephemeral episode of his youth; rather, it was an important part of his whole biography. Richard's character had also been formed in fiery discussions on political issues with other young idealists. Searching for a grand cause, on a scale for the social changes needed, he wanted to serve for the brighter future of his native

Poland, Europe, and – why not – even the rest of the world. That was the reason for his choice as a teenager to join a radical leftist youth organization. For those activities, he was expelled from a prestigious Warsaw high school. More severe persecutions could have followed, so Richard's father decided to send his son away from temptation and possible so-called sin. Far away, in a literal sense, to the other side of the world – to Canada, where Richard's uncle lived. Europe was heading in a dangerous direction and becoming an unsafe place to stay anyway; it was 1937.

In Montreal, Richard intended to continue his education. He did not need to think twice about what kind of career to choose. It had to be in the field of Arts, creative writing in particular.

But WWII broke out and Richard, a resident of Canada still holding a Polish passport, considered it to be irresponsible not to partake. With this in mind he volunteered for the Canadian Air Force. Later on, when the Polish Air Force (under the command of the British RAF), had formed in the United Kingdom, Richard became one of about 17 thousand Polish pilots. His squadron mostly operated from airbases within the United Kingdom and Italy, but he also flew in the skies of North Africa and participated in a mission that aimed to support Polish resistance in the days of the Warsaw Uprising. Later on, he partook in bombing raids against Germany. In one accident with a plane fully loaded with bombs, his plane crashed; however, with a broken leg and arm he made it back to his station alive. There were many other incidents where Richard was brought within a hair's breadth of death. For his extraordinary service during the war he received not only the Polish but also the British Commonwealth, and the Canadian Volunteer Service awards.

At the end of the war, Richard still believed his family to be in Warsaw. Alas, they were



not. Not a single member of Richard's family survived. He never found out where and when they perished.

Korczak, with all of the children under his care, also perished. Most of Richard's boyhood friends perished. So many others perished. "My youth perished in flames", Richard once said.

After seven long years of fighting, Richard returned to Canada. The war had stolen years that were meant to be his time of study. He simply missed the boat. He had never received the degree in humanities that he had so longed for. Since then, however, he had been his own teacher and remained so till his last day.

The earliest of Richard's poems that were preserved in his files had been marked with the date of the end of the war – now that the cannons ceased speaking, the lyres were tuned. Still, his muse and his heart alike were bleeding profusely. He started writing his poetry in English; this required considerable courage but Richard was used to challenges.

The brutality of the war and the twilight of humanity Richard had witnessed, still occupied his mind. That is why the colours in his expressionistic lyrics of that period are predominantly dark. They are featured with a lot of questions; difficult and provocative ones, mostly directed to himself. Why was I saved when so many perished? There were no answers to those questions, but sometimes asking is no less a significant act than answering.

Richard was trying to sum up what had been left behind, the war and the Holocaust, and finally started to build his future. He worked in various fields, but whatever he did, he first of all laboured at understanding the meaning of existence. Reflection was not something that he only fell into while at leisure; it filled out every moment of his life – between being and seeing.

This kind of contemplative, and at the same time, passionate thinking is a highlight of his poetry. His unceasing, perpetual, and almost obsessive desire to comprehend what a human being is was conveyed by the images of widely open eyes or awakened mind, constant in his poetic vocabulary. Comprehension and self-awareness were certainly his moral imperatives, and that was what he had in mind whenever he took up his pen or rather, if you wish, whenever his pen took him up.

Richard was a modest man, not at all public; I even dare say he hid in his solitary shell. His poetry was both his inner dialogue and search for identity. His writing helped him to withstand all the tribulations that he faced: at first immigration, then the war, financial difficulties, family crisis, health problems – and still find a way to live his time to the fullest.

Perhaps in the diverse reality around him Richard loved culture most of all. He himself felt confident and secure in the inter-literary space of the Bible & Latin authors, Andalusian folklore & Jorge Manrique, Proust & Claudel, T. S. Elliot & Wallace Stevens, and certainly, the Polish poets of the 20th century. This kind of poetry in poetry is an original feature of his style and it deepens his poetic world. In this sense, Richard was a perfect Canadian, *le Canadien absolu*, who preserved his own heritage and manifested his open-mindedness to any other culture.

Time in Richard's poems is always lost, abandoned, flowing away, disappearing, or vanishing. "There is not much time / days are running by / I cannot stop / I have lost my way / By the by / if it's not untoward / do tell me: / am I running towards or away?" Rivers such as the Vistula and Seine that you cannot step twice into, flow in his poems but first and foremost it seems the eternal river of Styx. In his poetry Eros is definitely overwhelmed by Tanatos.



As Richard's widow, Petronella Aders-Mirabel, who had been his best friend and the only reader of his poems for many years put it, his mother died when he was a baby, and then the war came that left him without anybody. That explained the taste of bitterness that he carried with him throughout his entire life. That feeling made Richard, who as a soldier was 'solid as a rock' but as a poet 'light as a feather', vulnerable and exposed to all the winds of endurance.

Heartbroken though most of his lyrics are, they are more about his great need for love than about his frustration. That is that need for love that Richard chiseled into his poems. These are the best things that he left us, and in essence, the only ones.



Poems by Richard Mirabel

AT THE CROSSROADS

At the crossroads of a war torn city
sommambulists
gather for a midnight meeting

A whore all dressed in red
and an old basilisk
with a halo above his head

A blind soldier roams around
on a futile search
for his amputated arm

A drunk old wretch on a broken bench
bends and squats
to belch

Behind the window's iron lattice
sommambulists weave
nightmares of kilims
gratis

FEAR

The Angel of Fear
is poorly in sight

He left his wings
somewhere deep
when my heart took flight

At times there are times
I can feel them
flapping so near

Peering into his moist eyes
I am always compelled
to turn around

And let my heart be found

This Angel of Fear
so poorly in sight

THE PAINTED LANDSCAPE

Those hues so azure
hold the silence
stored in cubes of ice

and the calm cools my burning eyes

I enter into the frame
walk through the fields
and with my eyes
climb the rolling hills

explore the forest
touch the bark of trees
and the downy grass
well under my feet

after the feast
I drape my shadow
on the racks of branches
before departing



A PAUSE IN BETWEEN

A pause this tiny pause

this single spark
a universe all in itself

as dawn turns to dusk

I, the spark,
embrace the knot
of old oaks
decaying

I hear all the stones
on this land
crying deep
and weeping loud

on my knees I gather
the warmth
of fallen leaves
and caress all the young grass

as dawn turns to dusk

Only then do I feel
only then do I exist

a tiny pause in between

Richard Mirabel. *Poems*

Richard Mirabel – Poet in Exile

*Reviewed by Lillian Boraks-Nemetz
Previously published in Zachor. Spring 2013.*

Richard Mirabel's *Poems* is a unique collection of work written in English and published posthumously in 2012 by K & O Harbour Press in Vancouver. The poems were selected and edited by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and

A HUMBLE VERSE

The purpose of a humble verse
is
not to try to please your refined tastes
or shower you with fancy words
for the sake of selling beauty

The purpose of a humble verse
is
to try to pose a question or two
even at the great risk
of being understood ■

Richard J. Reisner with introduction by
O. Medvedeva-Nathoo.

Richard Mirabel, the author of *Poems*, knew Janusz Korczak (né Henryk Goldszmit), the champion of children's rights, and worked with him in Warsaw, Poland, before the Second World War. Mirabel's wife, Mrs. Petronella Aders-Mirabel, responsible for the genesis of this book, is generously donating all proceeds to the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, based in Vancouver. The Association, under the leadership of Mr. Jerry Nussbaum has just finished celebrating the 2012 Year of Janusz Korczak, closing it with a very successful conference, co-organized by the Department of Education at the University of British Columbia and co-sponsored by the Polish Consulate in Vancouver, Consul General Mr. Christopher Czapla, and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center.

Poems is Mirabel's only book. It is slim, yet speaks volumes. The poems are philosophical, sensitive in their exploration of the émigré existence, the passage of time, survival and love, its fragility and its strength. It is an autobiographical journey during which the poet intermingles his past with the present, stringing his images like pearls on the elastic of time.



The poet is intensely aware of the passage of time in a man-made concept of the universe where he desperately searches for meaning:

In a universe without meaning
we created one
by measuring the value
of our being
against the indifference
of time passed and passing.

Other poems speaks of man's solitude in a world where both the past and the present are only to be found in some existential universe, where one is carried by forces beyond human control.

I stopped
perhaps only for a night
on my journey to nowhere
on a search
of time lost

Mirabel follows the paths of many poets in exile such as Bogdan Czaykowski, Waclaw Iwaniuk and Anna Frajlich, all preoccupied with displacement, loss and the search for meaning. Survival is questioned in the poet's imagery and the solitary tone and mood expressed through memory in the following verse.

Why from the nights
dark as beginning
was I to survive?

Why was I left
without any meaning
only combing the ashes
and dreaming of the past?

Why was I saved
when so many perished?

Mirabel's references to love lift this poetry from its innate darkness towards the light of spirituality and passion.

The poet sometimes speaks of love as if it were inaccessible, even frightening and unworthy of trust.

Do not answer the calls
of her seductive charms
or the sharpness of her thorns
will bleed your open arms

But in essence the poet longs for love and sings its praise to his wife:

Grateful
for feeling
again alive

I welcome the first sight
and this fine touch
a joyful summer light

Thankful for the gift of your love.

The search and need for personal love, its juxtaposition to indifference in the world of wars, of lovelessness, and solitude is what drives Mirabel's poetry.

In this thoughtful collection of verse, Mirabel leaves his soul's journey for posterity. ■



Photo by G. Sanaeva

Poetry evening at the Zack Gallery

By Malgorzata Burczycka

George Medvedev
giving his talk about
Richard Mirabel's
poetry.

Photo by K. Nathoo



Those who gathered at the Zack Gallery of the Jewish Community Centre on October 4, 2012 for an evening of poetry were in for a real treat. The aim of the event was to promote a book of poems by Richard Mirabel – who wrote poetry his entire adult life, but never published a word.

Mirabel was a very colourful person. Teenage journalist in the pre-war Poland, pilot for the Canadian Air Force during WWII, successful businessman, art collector, music lover and very private man.

After Richard's death in 2007, his wife, Petronella Aders-Mirabel, decided that his poems were too good to be locked in a closet, never to be read again. She decided to publish some of them under the careful editorial guidance of Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, who knew the poet and spent hours in his home interviewing

him about his connection to Janusz Korczak and *The Little Review*.

The evening of October 4th was special for another reason, as well. It was an intimate, almost family affair. In the presence of Petronella, master of ceremonies, Dr. George Medvedev presented an onscreen introduction to the poet's life with the music of Brahms – Mirabel's favorite composer – playing the background.

Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo then introduced listeners to Mirabel's poetry, pointing out influences of the ancient and contemporary poets found in Mirabel's poems.

Mirabel's works were read by four young people from the same family; different in age and interests, but all poetry lovers. Aslam Nathoo, a computer scientist; Zulfikar Nathoo, a musician; Yakov Medvedev, a high school student;



Reciters of Richard Mirabel's poems (from left): Aslam Nathoo, Zulfikar Nathoo, Yakov Medvedev and David Medvedev. Photo by R. Henderson

and little brother David Medvedev, a student in elementary school. Each presented poems about war, longing and sorrow; about the Holocaust, death and despair; but also about love and beauty.



*Petronella Aders-Mirabel.
Photo by R. Henderson*

Towards the end of the evening Grazyna Zambrzycka, herself a published poet, presented her translations of some of Mirabel's poems into the Polish language.

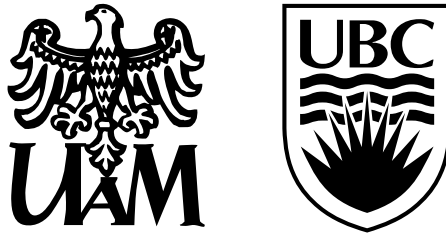
It is worth a mention that the house was full – somewhat unusual for an evening poetry reading.

Media coverage

O. Medvedeva-Nathoo. *Maly wiersz Ryszarda Mirabela. Wybor wierszy. /Selected poems. In Polish and English. Translated into Polish by Grazyna Zambrzycka. – Aha! Polish-Canadian Literary Magazine. No. 199, April 2013.*

Poems by Richard Mirabel can be purchased through the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. Please e-mail to jkorcakasn@shaw.ca

In 2012, conferences dedicated to Janusz Korczak's heritage and children's rights were organized around the world. Our Board member Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo took part in a few of them. Below we publish her brief report on these events.



Korczak Remembered

By Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo

The Conference *Janusz Korczak – an Outstanding Man and Pedagogue* took place at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, under the auspices of the Chancellor of the University, Prof. Bronislaw Marciniak, on March 5, 2012. This initiative, set in motion by the Chancellor, received strong support from the University's Department of Education, alma mater of many notable scholars in the field of pedagogy.

The Conference was planned as the first step of cooperation between the Departments of Education of the Adam Mickiewicz University and the University of British Columbia, with participation of our Association.

The organizers hosted the Ombudsman for Children's Rights of Poland, Minister Marek Michalak, and other Polish pedagogues whose contributions to education cannot be underestimated.

Well known to our Korczakians, Prof. Jadwiga Binczycka in her paper *Significance of meetings with Korczak*, shared her lifelong experience of teaching Korczak's ideas to students of educational programs; Prof. Barbara Smolinska-Theiss took a floor with a topic *Korczak's Ghetto Diary in the prism of pedagogy*; Prof. Boguslaw Sliwerski elaborated on the

theme *Discussion about nonstressful education with Korczak in the background*. Prof. Wieslaw Theiss touched the historical topic *Children – victims of the war (1939 – 1945): draft of the collective portrait*, while Prof. Ewa Jarosz presented the treatise *Korczak's legacy and contemporary concept of children's participation in social life*. Prof. Hanna Krauze-Sikorska's paper was dedicated to the theme *A child in the world of irrational adults. Reflections on "the right of a child to dignity and to be who he/she is"*.



Prof. Bronislaw Marciniak, Chancellor of the Adam Mickiewicz University and Prof. Anna M. Kindler, Vice Provost of the University of British Columbia



Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo giving her speech at the Conference

From left: Prof. Barbara Smolinska-Theiss, Head of the Department of Social Pedagogy at Academy of Special Education in Warsaw; Prof. Jadwiga Binczycka, an authoritative expert on Korczak's legacy; Prof. Anna M. Kindler, Vice Provost of University of British Columbia; Jerry Nussbaum, Chairman of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada; Prof. Zbyszko Melosik, Head of the Department of Sociology of Education at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan; Prof. Bronislaw Marciniak, Chancellor of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan.

Finally, Dr. Zbignew Rudnicki and Dr. Edyta Glowacka-Sobiech, successively, talked about *Uncommon commonness: Janusz Korczak in the light of his Ghetto Diary* and *About Janusz Korczak as a charismatic leader of the youngsters and champion of children's rights*.

Among the participants of the Conference were three guests from Canada. Prof. Anna Kindler, Vice Provost of UBC represented the above-mentioned University while Jerry Nussbaum and Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo represented our Association.

Prof. A. Kindler in her paper *Childhood in the 21st century from North-American perspective*, with very clear and convincing arguments, showed the negative influence of mass media on children's formation and new challenges that these factors create for parents and educa-

tors. The audience received this relevant topic with evident interest. On the other hand, Dr. O. Medvedeva-Nathoo's discourse *Korczak through the eyes of his children* was devoted to the history of Korczak's Orphanage, viewed through the lenses of its residents, who later on moved to Canada.

Olga's paper was associated with her book *May Their Lot be Lighter... Of Janusz Korczak and His Pupil* published by Poznan University Press in cooperation with our Association. The promotion of this book was one of the highlights of the event.

The other spotlight was the unveiling ceremony of the bronze-relief *Janusz Korczak and His Children* by Polish artist Marek Rona in the lobby of the Department of Education. This artistic piece is identical to the one that



Marek Rona and his work **Janusz Korczak and His Children**. Poznan, March 2012

later on, in November 2012, was installed at the University of British Columbia. Both events, the book promotion and the bronze-relief unveiling, not only attracted attention of the participants and guests of the Conference, but were enthusiastically met by them. Both were extensively covered in regional media.

When Olga was asked by journalists why she, being a specialist in Polish literature with a degree from Russia and currently living in

Canada, is deeply involved in the research of Korczak's heritage, she answered: "Korczak impersonates two objects of my 'desire': my professional interest in Polish culture and my personal interest in child's psychology."

Olga was repeatedly asked about one of the main characters of her book – Korczak's pupil, Leon Gluzman: How did she manage to evoke memories of a 93-year-old gentleman? Olga's answer was that the Polish language helped a great deal. Things that Leon was not able to recollect when being asked in English, vividly came back to him when asked in Polish. Ultimately, it was the language that he had used to talk to his beloved mentor, Janusz Korczak.

When discussing her album like book (it contains more than 130 pictures), Olga said that she had intended to make her book as an extensive commentary to Leon Gluzman's collection of Commemorative Postcards and photographs that he took with him when immigrating to Canada and managed to preserve them during his entire life. This collection was used as a canvas for the story of Leon's relations with Doctor Goldszmit – this is how children called Korczak in the 1920s when Leon Gluzman was one of the children in the Home for Orphans. Leon knew Korczak in his late thirties – early forties when his teacher was energetic, funny, constantly joking and improvising with children; definitely, not the Korczak whom we know from his last opus *The Ghetto Diary*.

Answering the questions about Korczak's relations with his pupils, Olga quoted Leon's recollection: "Throughout my time at the Korczak Home, the Doctor would help me with my problems. He would listen, never interrupt, and he understood me as if he was with me in all my difficulties – allowing me to talk my problems out, about everything that

was burning a hole in my heart. There was never a moment when he didn't help me see a ray of light. At the end of our talks, usually I would receive a chocolate-coated biscuit. He knew that was my favourite and would always have it ready for me."

That was the point – every child was certain that everything that Korczak did, he did, especially for him or her. And this is what made Korczak more than just the *Director of the Home for Orphans*; in fact, he became a *Father* to all the orphans. Using post-Korczak psychological terminology, Olga stated that his "family scenario" turned out to be exceptionally productive.

When answering the question about what task she set for herself while working on her book, Olga replied: "I wanted to preserve the lively and true memories about Korczak, a man of flesh and blood, and I knew that I had



*Prof. Jadwiga Binczycka and Ombudsman for Children's Rights of Poland, Minister Marek Michalak attended Olga's talk **My Korczak** at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw*



Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo makes her presentation at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw

to act fast, to try and catch the train that was leaving the station – to catch the past that was slipping away."

Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo's book *May Their Lot Be Lighter...* was a subject of the *Evening with the Author* at the Book Club Glosna in Poznan on March 5, 2012. The MC of the event was Richard Reisner, a translator of the book into English.

A talk by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, a part of the lecture series *My Korczak*, was held at

the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw on March 8, 2012.

As a sign of further cooperation between our Association and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo contributed to a new book – collection of articles published by Poznan University Press, titled *Notes on the Margins of Korczak's Books. Reading The Ghetto Diary of the Old Doctor* (ser. *Books about Books – Unveiling Ideas*). In her article *Janusz Korczak's Diary: Counting Days*, Olga scrutinized the author's usage of words such as *Ghetto*, *Death*, and *Life* in his last manuscript. She also made use of Korczak's other works written during the wars that he had participated in as a medical doctor. For that matter, she exploited some documents from the Russian Military Archives concerning Korczak's military service during Russo-Japanese war of 1905. The main purpose of the article can be described as an attempt to answer the difficult and 'rebellious' question: why did Korczak not release the children during the ghetto years giving them a chance to survive? According to the author of the article, his decision can be explained as pragmatic: He wanted to prevent his children from starvation, homelessness, humiliation and, eventually, death. However, his decision can be interpreted metaphysically as well: To release the children would have meant for Korczak to give in, to accept that Evil was taking over the Good. It would have meant for him to replace hope by simple and sober calculation. Meanwhile, hope even if absolutely groundless, is such a human feature: To have hope when there is no hope at all.

Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo contributed to celebration of the Year of Janusz Korczak in



Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo signing her book for Mrs. Henryka Krzywonos-Strycharska, the Polish Solidarity Movement activist; a recipient of the Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta. Henryka Krzywonos-Strycharska is also a holder of the Order Ecce Homo, which she was awarded "for longstanding and uncompromised fight for the truth, love and generosity for vulnerable children." Together with her husband Krzysztof Strycharski, she runs a family orphanage

Russia: her article *Korczak's Traces in Canada* was published in the book *Humanization of Childhood: International Dialogue*. Vol. 2. Kazan: The Janusz Korczak Association of Russia and Pedagogical University of Tatarstan, 2012. She also translated into Russian a lecture *Children Have the Right to Be Heard and Adults Should Listen to Their Views* delivered by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, in Warsaw in 2007. The lecture was published in book form by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Moscow.

Adults Who Care

KONSULAT GENERALNY
RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ POLSKIEJ
W NOWYM JORKU



CONSULATE GENERAL
OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
IN NEW YORK



**THE YEAR
OF JANUSZ
KORCZAK**

2012

**there are
no children,
only people**

The Seminar *Janusz Korczak and Children's Rights in Contemporary Perspective* was organized by Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York on May 8, 2012.

The Consul General of the Republic of Poland in New York Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka welcomed guests and participants from USA, Canada and Poland as well as representatives of international organizations such as the European Council and UNICEF, and historians known for their contribution in Polish-Jewish studies.

The opening remarks *Contribution of Poland to the Convention on the Rights of the Child* were made by Ambassador Witold Sobków, Head of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations

In the first part of the panel discussion *Janusz Korczak – a pioneer in defining and protecting children's rights. Contribution of Poland to the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, Honourary Patron of the Janusz Korczak Year, Former Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights took the floor. His lecture *Children have the right to be heard and adults should listen to their views* was received with extraordinary attention.

Ms. Mariola Strahlberg, a founder of the *Shining Mountain Center for Peaceful Childhood*, presented the paper *Theory and methods of Janusz Korczak in the pedagogical practices today, specifically in reference to the Article 29 of the UN Convention of Children's Rights with the potential for the development of Quiet Spaces to promote children's well-being.*

Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo, a Board member of our Association, presented a historic overview of pupils' life in Korczak's Orphanage, titled *The Home for Orphans as the Children's Republic*. The topic was examined in the context of Korczak's role in assimilated Jewish Warsaw, his contribution to Polish culture and his uniqueness as an educator who did not just describe children's lives but who instead lived their lives. In her presentation, she related what Korczak had written about *his Home* and emphasized what his former pupils (later on residents of Canada) said about *their Home*.

Korczak taught his children how to observe Jewish traditions and how to be proud of being Jewish. In spite of anti-Semitism that even children would experience in pre-war Poland, he taught them to love their country, forming

the base of their double Jewish-Polish identity, even if it was not being expressed that way.

The question frequently asked is, was Korczak's pedagogy Jewish? To this question Olga would answer affirmatively – as tradition is a part of our unconscious-self. But on the other hand, a part of our unconscious-self is also our language. In Korczak's case it was the Polish language, which he spoke to his children and wrote his works in.

Dr. Natalia Aleksiu, an assistant professor of Modern Jewish History at Touro College, Graduate School of Jewish Studies in New York introduced the topic *Janusz Korczak and his work in the Jewish and Polish contexts*.

Speaking in the second part of panel discussion *Basic education and gender equality*, Dr. Changu Mannathoko, UNICEF Senior Education Advisor touched the theme *There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls*.

Filmmakers Mr. Frederick Rendina and Mr. Oren Rudavsky showed their fascinating documentary *What does it take to educate a girl? Right to education and gender equality for all children*, which was shot in Nepal and Uganda, "countries emerging from conflicts and struggling with poverty".

In the third part of discussion *Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse* inspiring papers were presented by:

Dr. Paweł Jaros, former Ombudsman for Children's Rights, Poland, – *From Korczak's children's rights to ban on corporal punishment of children*.

Dr. Susan Bissell, Chief of Child Protection, Program Division, UNICEF, – *Protection of children on the move including in the context of trafficking*.



Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo with Marek Web, a historian at YIVO (Institute for Jewish Research), and Anna Frajlich, a poet and a senior lecturer at Columbia University, at the Janusz Korczak Conference in New York

Ms. Jo Becker, Children's Rights Advocacy Director, Human Rights Watch, – *Recent progress and new challenges in protecting children from violence and exploitation*.

Dr. Yvonne Rafferty, Professor of Psychology, NY/NGO Representative to the UN, – *Child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation: a review of promising prevention policies and programs*

and

Ms. Raquel Evita Saraswati, Muslim American activist and writer, – *Women and children in Arab Spring*.

With the variety of topics covered in the presentations and the active audience participation in discussion, the Seminar in New York was a real success.



My Journey as a Child Holocaust Survivor



The lecture delivered by Dr. Robert Krell, the keynote speaker during the Holocaust memorial ceremony in the United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York on January 27, 2012. Dr. R. Krell is a Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia and a member of our Association

I was born in The Hague, Holland on 5 August 1940. After nearly three years in hiding during the Holocaust, I returned to my parents who had also miraculously survived. I heard the stories of other returning survivors who came through our living room and told their tales of unrelenting horrors. What could a child possibly say about his or her own experiences, of the loss of childhood or adolescence, of deprivation and fear, of separation from family? We remained silent, as silent as when we had been in hiding.

On 19 August 1942, we were ordered to report for “resettlement to the East”. My parents, Leo and Emmy Krell, were aware that none of their friends who obeyed had returned. We fled the house, taking nothing with us, not even a photo album,

especially not a photo album. I was placed with former neighbours, and through a series of miracles ended up in the home of Albert and Violette Munnik and their 12-year-old daughter, Nora.

For nearly three years they risked their lives simply because “it was the right thing to do”. At the Munniks’, my memory begins at age two or two-and-a-half. I was leaning against my Father learning to call him Uncle, as he were just a close friend of the family. I had to be careful not to refer to him as my Father.

While living with the Munniks, I was warned to stay away from the front window. I was a little boy with a mop of dark-brown hair in a sea of blondes. I quickly absorbed a sense of danger and fear, especially when Nora took me out in a buggy. That was so unusual that I remember it vividly. We reached a viaduct that was partly flooded. A German soldier came over to help carry the buggy. I had pulled the blanket over my face. I was perhaps three years old.

Many years later, I asked Nora where we were going. Initially, she denied my memory, but I would not give in. She eventually acknowledged that we were going to visit my Mother. I asked if we arrived there because I could not remember. She said we did, but unfortunately that was the day the Gestapo showed up to search the tiny apartment. We hid under the bed and my mother succeeded in turning them away.

Nora had good reason to forget that memory because she had endangered us all. Except for that lapse, she proved to be a wonderful older sister, hiding my existence from her school friends and coming home early to teach me how to read and write. And I was a terrific little

brother: quiet, cooperative and obedient. I never complained, not of pain or illness. I did not cry — ever. Not until liberation.

After the war's end, I protested having to leave the Munniks' home and return to my parents. The three of us had survived. Almost everyone else in my family had been murdered, including my Mother's and Father's parents and all of my aunts and uncles. My aunt Mania's son had survived in hiding, similar to me. But aunt Mania had been killed at Sobibor and her husband at Auschwitz, so my cousin was orphaned and remained with his rescuers. Liberation was not particularly liberating for Jewish children. A new set of challenges arose: how to survive survival.

At this point in 1945, we knew so little. But the news spread quickly. More than 80 per cent of Holland's 140,000 Jews had been murdered. (The Fate of the Jews across Europe. Yad Vashem. <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/about/09/europe.asp>). Of those deported via Westerbork to Auschwitz and Sobibor, only about 5,000 returned. (The Netherlands. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Holocaust Encyclopedia. <http://www.ushmmn.org/wic/en/article.php>)

I did not yet know I was a Jew. In fact, my first postwar school was a Catholic kindergarten, where I was the Mother Superior's prize pupil, or perhaps most promising convert. I learned about being Jewish from hearing the stories of survivors who gathered in our home. They spoke in Yiddish of Auschwitz and other mysterious places. Their stories were ably translated by my second cousin Milly, who had returned from Switzerland, where her family had escaped. Hearing stories no child should ever hear, we listened even more attentively. Our experiences meant we had grown up too quickly, too seriously. We had become elderly children.

Apparently, there were children willing to speak. Some tried to be heard. Yet, few were asked,



Robbie Krell at about 6 months of age with his mother, Emmy Krell-Stelzer. The Hage, Holland. 1941

“What was it like for you? What did you see? What happened to you? How did you feel?” Adults assumed that children were lucky. Lucky not to have memories. Lucky not to have suffered unless they were in concentration camps. Lucky not to have understood what was happening. Most of the assumptions proved to be wrong.

The pre-war mental health professionals, who had been preoccupied with even a single trauma experienced by a child, were nowhere to be seen. Jewish children subjected to a relentless series of traumas for months and years received little help. Perhaps the problems of brutalised children were simply too overwhelming even for the healers. We remained silent. It was expected of us.

Therefore we were alone, struggling with fragments of memories that were painful and made little sense. Most of us thought we were a little crazy and kept that belief, as well as other secrets, to ourselves. The reality of being hunted left many with a sense of shame. Who but the guilty



*Robert Krell at The Hage, Holland.
1948*

are pursued with such ferocity? But we had not done anything. The Jewish people were the target of a genocidal assault on their existence, and genocide demands the killing of children. The Nazis and their legions of enthusiastic collaborators achieved near success. In the countries under German occupation, 93 per cent of Jewish children were murdered. (The author's own estimates, based on the work of Deborah Dwork in *Children with a Star*. She estimated that 11 per cent of Jewish children alive in 1939 survived the war, but that figure includes children spirited out of Europe on Kindertransports and rescued prior to 1 September 1939).

My parents and I immigrated to Canada in 1951. There, I felt liberated. This was my chance to become normal. We, children, learned the language and we learned to fit in.

Yet, I still encountered the murders of Jewish children through the eyes of Holocaust survivors who were friends of my family. In our Synagogue, Anshel, a broad-shouldered, powerful man, sat in front of me. He would turn to greet me with a huge smile and firm handshake. But on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, his

shoulders shook as he mourned the murders of his first wife and two children, ages three and five. And I would cry with him. There were others there who had lost their children. I learned from their tears how to cry in silence, just as I had learned to live in silence. Silence is the language of the child survivor. Unlike the older survivors and their second-generation children, we maintained our silence for forty years.

A turning point came in 1981 at the First World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem. I heard Rabbi Israel Meier Lau state that at age eight he was the youngest survivor of Buchenwald. It was like a bolt of lightning. He was eight years old, I was five, and my cousins were six and nine. We were all child Holocaust survivors. Within a year, I helped found the Child Holocaust Survivors' Group of Los Angeles, organized a panel of child survivor psychiatrists and psychologists to speak at the American Psychiatric Association meetings in 1984, and served on the Advisory Committee for the First International Gathering of Child Survivors in New York in 1991. About 1,600 people attended; most were children who had survived in hiding, along with a smaller number of child concentration camp survivors.

We, child survivors, had found our voice and we had found each other. We were the only ones who truly understood the impact of those terrible years. We were pursued by our memories. Not pleasant recollections of childhood, but memories encompassing darkness and fear, hunger and cold, and the endless grief and mourning for lost family and lost childhood.

Since then, we have gathered annually under the auspices of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and their Descendants. We have met in Los Angeles and Toronto, in Prague and Amsterdam, in Montreal and Jerusalem, in Houston and Cracow.

Together, we tackle the issues that plague us: the meaning of faith, the struggle with our identity, the intrusion of fragments of memories and the nightmares. These nightmares, which we seldom mention, never go away. Mine reek of death. Death remains close to those who survived. My mother discovered late in life that her parents and little sister had been hiding in a hole dug into frozen ground in a forest in Poland. Local Poles discovered them and murdered them with shovels and axes. From that point, I was burdened with the thought of who was the first to die. Did 13-year-old Raisel, my aunt, see her parents murdered, or were they witness to their daughter's death? How were such things possible? I remain haunted by their absence.

Throughout the Holocaust, children were burned alive in pits. They, along with their families, were driven into wooden synagogues and set on fire. Others were buried alive. Babies were killed in ways too brutal for words, words that I cannot speak. And this was done by people inspired by teachings from the pulpits in the churches they frequented.

As a consequence, perhaps we, survivors, have come to view death differently. My father never set foot in a Jewish cemetery, not even for the burial of friends. He suffered from an overdose of death. Elie Wiesel, author, Nobel Prize recipient and survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, captured the essence when he was asked about his readjustment to life. He said, "Our educators after the war thought they had to help us adjust to life. Our problem was how to adjust to death. Death was an everyday phenomenon, we were used to death. We woke up with corpses. After the war, we had to develop a new relationship of respect, awe and fear in the presence of death." (Children during the Holocaust, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005142>>) How true. Death had lost its meaning. What is the meaning of the murders of 1.5 million Jewish children?



Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, a Board Member of our Association and a child survivor of the Holocaust, in the Polish countryside, 1939

What is the meaning of the murders of nearly one million Rwandans in 100 days, a rate of some ten thousand per day? (Kigali Memorial Centre <<http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/genocide/index.html>>) The meaninglessness of the killings is intensified by the arrogance of the killers.

As one survivor in my program once confided, "I must tell you something. In Poland, in my village, the Germans arrived. One with a camera posed a little girl for a photo. She was Jewish, the daughter of a friend of mine. But she had blue eyes and curly, blonde hair. He placed her by a tree, gave her an apple, walked away, turned and shot her in the head. The apple fell. He picked it up wiped it, and ate it. I can still hear the crunching". It is the meaninglessness of these murders that must be addressed.

His Excellency Richard Sezibera, M.D., former Ambassador of Rwanda to the United States, addressed the Houston Forum on "Children and Genocide" that formed part of our annual gathering of child Holocaust survivors in 2001. He stated, "Memory is the highest, and per-



haps the most meaningful tribute one can pay to the victims of genocide. Those who commit genocide do not only intend to kill, but to erase their victims from the collective memory of the world". He continued, "We survive, and we remember. We heal and we become agents of healing. For personifying this, I salute all the survivors of the Holocaust." (R. Sezibera, From the *Holocaust to Healing the World*. Edited by S. Johnson. Houston Holocaust Museum, 2003)

I am so proud that Holocaust survivors have spoken out and have been faithful to memory. We have struggled to find meaning and thereby enabled others to speak of their own tragedies. Our insistence on preserving memory has not prevented other genocides, but perhaps has served as a reminder for those in power, making it harder for the killers to kill. It is clear that we must remember that, which we would rather forget. But we cannot; we are not allowed to forget. We must not participate in the murder of memory, the ultimate objective of the murderers.

We must teach, and that confers the awesome responsibility to veracity and truth. Teachers cannot talk of Anne Frank and her belief in the goodness of mankind without including details of her betrayal and gruesome death in Bergen-Belsen. We do not know what she might have said had she survived. And we must pursue justice. For in genocidal murders, the perpetrators have not only killed and left behind wounded survivors, but they have torn the fabric of human society.

We must remember our losses. The murdered Jewish children have left a tremendous void. We will never know what they might have contributed to human existence. But we can guess. Of the 1,000 children found in Buchenwald on 11 April 1945, 426 were brought to Ecouis, France to recover. That small group alone produced Rabbi Israel Meier Lau, recently Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel; his brother Naftalie Lavie, a former Israeli Consul to New York; Rabbi Menashe

Klein; the physicist Kalman Kalikstein; many physician-specialists in the United States and France; medical directors of hospitals; numerous teachers and businessmen; and, of course, Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel. Few, if any, became a burden in the countries where they settled. Not one exacted revenge unless revenge includes the successful recapture of a meaningful life against overwhelming odds.

We observe the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust each year that reminds us what is possible when racism and prejudice run wild. In remembering the Shoah, we ensure that all those who deny this tragic event in order to write their own fictional version are exposed for the world to see. No longer can a fascist leader with mass murder in mind dismiss his critics, as did Hitler, with "Who remembers the Armenians?" We have chosen to keep hopes and dreams alive for our people, as well as our children and grandchildren. For surely we have learned that hatred directed towards the Jewish people never stops with Jews. We are your warning, we elderly children now grown old. Listen to us carefully. We carry a message from over there. ■

Photo of one more child survivor of the Holocaust and a member of our Association, Jozef Zalewski, could be placed here. Unfortunately, no photos of his childhood years remain.

Jozef Zalewski was born in January 1942 in the Warsaw Ghetto. Later, he and his sister Jadwiga, were smuggled out of the ghetto by their father. The former housemaid of the family, a Polish lady, took care of little Jozef and Jadwiga. Their parents did not survive the war. After 1945, the siblings were lodged at the Jewish orphanage in Poland.

Editors

If Janusz Korczak Would Be Alive Today

Translated from the Polish by Iwona and Ashton Haskins. Fragments from Korczak's works translated by Jerzy Bachrach and Barbara Krzywicka as well as Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and Lillian Boraks-Nemetz

If Janusz Korczak lived today, what would his opinion on our present way of life be? Is it any closer to what he longed for compared to his own time? What would his view be on the present education system? Would he be satisfied with our level of enforcement of human rights towards the weakest of us? On the other hand, how would he be perceived by others nowadays? Would he be in the centre of the upper society's parties? Would he accept invitations to such events? If so, wouldn't he cause scandals by exposing the shallowness and stupidity of the some party-goers? Would anyone listen to him?

What do we love Korczak for? We could answer to that with a paraphrase of famous Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz's wording with a hint of irony: It is so for "what a great educator he was"! To the average person, Korczak is associated with the heroic gesture of giving his life for others, going with the children of his Orphanage into the gas chambers of Treblinka death camp (many people confuse this place with Auschwitz).

When we describe great people, we unwittingly strip them of their true image, ignoring those features that interfere with our idealistic portrayal of them. Once people are gone, their closed biography enables us to tinker their hagiography. We are firm that these great figures were embodiments of virtues of all kinds and that they had qualities we don't possess ourselves, though we desire them. We revere the image of Korczak when he heroically accompanied his children towards *Umschlagplatz*.



By Dr. Zbigniew Rudnicki, the Faculty of Education of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

The era we live in, is characterized by a culture of hastiness, and it caters to those of us who are able to adapt quickly and efficiently to the changing world. However, are the keys to effectiveness and acceleration of all operations and processes, the ones that not so long ago occurred slowly, able to satisfy all the fundamental needs of the 21st century man? Does "fast" always mean "good"? Is "easy" the same as "satisfying"? Are we losing more than we gain, at a hectic rate? Our present vision of a "happy man" suggests that life goes on without any worries, suffering or toil. We accept effort, but only within a planned, structured sense-assuring completion of the intended goal. *Utilitas*, being the friend of tactical efficiency, is now triumphing over *Sapientia*, its virtue

perceived as increasingly impractical. Even when we discuss contemplation, we define it as having a clearly established goal and guaranteed desired success.

Korczak's aversion towards the discovered truth as something that is ultimate, final and unchangeable (for it's only one of the cognitive stages) was demonstrated in his anti-systemic stance. Systems with its unambiguously determined meanings were for him unacceptable. Contemporary ideology of clear standards and straying from uncertainty greatly reduces the natural margin for error during the process of searching. Everything has to be structured from the very beginning. Every single next step must go according to an outlined plan.

“It is no shame to not know something, to make a mistake, to forget something; even the most clever person may not understand a question or can utter something stupid. But right away this provokes laughter, criticism, and mockery. So people stick to books, repeating what they had read, afraid to voice their own opinion. This is why there is much insincerity...” (J. Korczak. *Prawidła życia. Pedagogika dla dzieci i młodzieży*. Warszawa, 1988, s. 77)

Would Korczak, with his views pertaining to the aforementioned, be employed and able to sustain his job, especially in a modern school?

In his writings from the time of the Holocaust we see a side of Janusz Korczak that differs from the one the public is most familiar with. He is no longer the gentle and kind Old Doctor but an easily irritable spitfire determined to fight for the children's survival, without mercy, against the meanness, laziness and stupidity of adults.

For the children's sake, he didn't hesitate to risk his own reputation and was not afraid of negative opinions. For example, in his correspondence with the Association for the Care



*A monument to Korczak and his children at the Jewish Cemetery in Warsaw.
Photo by Anna Blaszczyk*

of Orphans and Abandoned Children, he was dissatisfied with their devious response and he wrote sternly: “I don't threaten, I warn. Enough clowning and hateful chicanery”. (J. Korczak. *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta*. Warszawa, 2012, s. 225)

Although he had defined himself as “an organizer not quite able to be the boss”, when we see the programs he created for his institutions, this statement is debatable. As early as two days after submitting his applications to the Human Resources Office of the Jewish Council for the post of a tutor at the Orphanage at Dzielna Street 39 (that he himself called a “funeral house and children's slaughterhouse”) he developed a detailed action plan in ten points, that revealed his tenderness towards children's poverty and life pragmatism:

“[...]”

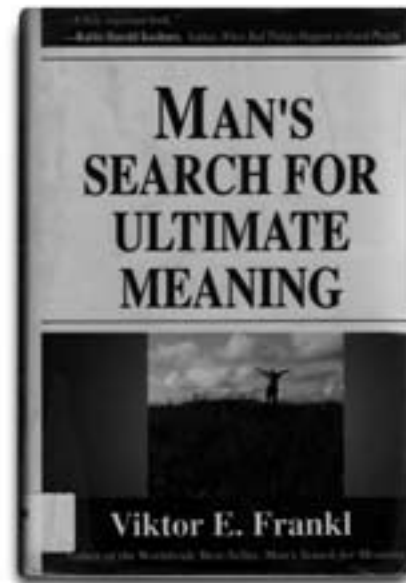
4. To install thermometers in bedrooms...
5. The first attempt to find a common language with the staff in regards to the hierarchy of needs

6. To check the sewage system... with a specialist
[...]
8. Spend an hour at the office
[...]
10. To write a speech..."
(J. Korczak. *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta*. Warszawa, 2012, s. 172)

Korczak didn't care about appearances. He was free from the constraints of rigid customs. His natural behavior may be upsetting or seen as controversial by some. "What on earth such a distinguished person, of great public trust, loyal to the social norms", because in his aforementioned application describes himself in the following way: "I have voracious appetite, sleep soundly; recently, after the tenth shot of strong vodka, I returned home alone at a brisk pace from Rymarska to Sienna Street – late at night". (J. Korczak. *Ghetto Diary*. New York, 1978, p. 5) What would happen if he wrote these words applying for a job in his CV today?

It's worth asking how honest our present infatuation with Janusz Korczak is, when he himself perceived his life as failed and tragic. "My share in the Japanese war. Defeat – disaster. In the European war – defeat – disaster. In the World War [...] I don't know how and what a soldier of a victorious army feels..." (J. Korczak. *Ghetto Diary*. New York, 1978, p. 87)

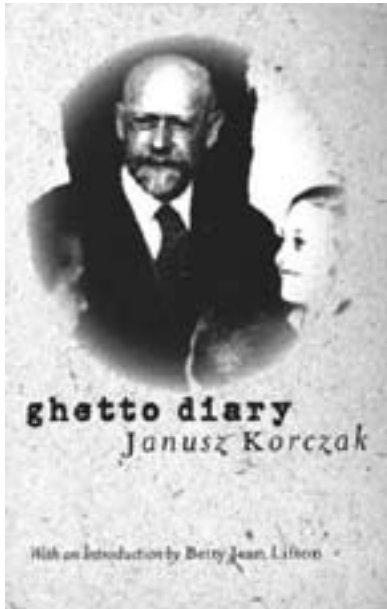
Korczak's evaluation of human's life differs radically from the one, which is circulated by mainstream educational concepts. Korczak's own life can be seen as an ongoing process of self-deprecation, however, this should not be interpreted as fatalism. A thoughtful reading of his notes in the *Ghetto Diary* written during the last weeks of his life, allows us to see clearly his experience as the "naked existence" (using the term of Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist and a Holocaust survivor, that was introduced in his book *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*).



Would all those who now admire Korczak and view his writings as a 'Holy Bible' of pedagogy (Korczak said..., Korczak wrote ...) like to have Korczak as their own manager, neighbour or family member? Would they come to understand and favour his steadfastness and firmness, even throughout bouts of aggression and bitterness towards those who, in his opinion, had malicious intentions in fighting "for the children's good"? When he saw thoughtless harm being done to a child he didn't mince words.

"...A certain idiot, an educator from Wolska Street... a dumbbell... that same boor... School is pleasant but a stupid or brutal teacher can make it disgusting... an old maniac, mean and vulgar ... shameless hooligans and thoughtless rascals from a school..." (J. Korczak. *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta*, s. 255-257)

Would Korczak like making education a kind of vanity fair, festooned with trinkets and jingling with novelties? From what we know of his hot headedness, we could rather expect him to make a whip to disperse the self-important band of educators.



The upbringing of a child should be careful and unhurried, because every man is a unique individual. Today, in the era of the hurried lifestyle, people have learned that life is interesting only when it is full of constantly changing stimuli, without which boredom takes over. It is as if we forgot there were consequences for the lack of an inspired life, and the shallow experience of it.

We may admire Korczak's set of educational methods for their relevance and applicability to the developmental needs of man and society. Moreover, if we delve into their meanings we will have to admit that the effects they generated are still desirable. As always, the man with well-developed qualities of character and willpower along with sensitivity to the needs of others, who is also an active member of society, passes through life in a positive manner. However, all of these things happen to require meeting one fundamental prerequisite: knowing oneself. To optimize the world we need to start with ourselves, not wait for others to do it first. Korczak knew that reaching these goals must be achieved through severe but reward-

ing work. He presented this idea with use of a metaphor for digging a well: „The decision is made. There's strength enough to start. And, in fact, is any work ever really finished? Roll up your sleeves. A firm grip on the shovel. Let's go! One, two; one, two...

[...] I seek subterranean springs; I push aside clear, cold streams of water and browse through the memories.

May I help you?

No, my dear friend, this each man must do alone. Nobody can undertake the job for him or replace him. Everything else we can do together so long as you trust and respect me; but this final work of mine – I must do myself”.

(J. Korczak, *Ghetto Diary*, p. 81)

Korczak's respect for the human being stemmed from his admiration of every individual's unfathomable mystery. “What a strange creature is a human being. Each one contains the whole world.” (J. Korczak. *Prawidła życia*, s. 61)

If so, it is really difficult to reconcile Korczak's perception of humanity with that which we observe today and which has a significant impact on our perception of education and all the pedagogical works and institutions serving it. In a world where convenience is the most valuable asset, along with ease of acquisition and pleasure, it's hard to understand these words: “A human being strives to make an effort. He or she wants to succeed, to know if he is able to reach a goal, to overcome difficulties, to convince himself and others that he is strong and graceful. Sitting around is exhausting.” “I prefer what is more difficult. I want to attain and to win. I want to be victorious. I know myself. I know how to be silent and how to command orders. I am brave and patient. I am soft for the others but tough on myself.” (Janusz Korczak. *Prawidła życia*, s. 50, 108)

The topic of Korczak is easiest to approach when the opportunity arises to honourably

name a school or educational institution, or convene a conference under the title “Janusz Korczak a champion of children’s rights” or “Janusz Korczak – the children’s friend.” These are all beautiful and safe catchphrases. One often hears the sentence: “We love Korczak cause he gave his life for children”, but this kind of appreciation of his greatness seems to be a radical misunderstanding – there were other educators that voluntarily went along with their pupils to death (among them Dabrowski and Szternfeld – the manager of boy’s dormitory at 7 Twarda Street – and Broniatowska – manager of a girls’ hostel at 28 Sliska Street).

Without diminishing their heroic sacrifice, we have to admit that Korczak’s uniqueness stems from his lifelong devotion to children. Unnecessary attempts to present Korczak from the viewpoint of his death as a demigod, in effect distract from the very essence of his deeds. “... Because you shouldn’t look for a hole in the whole, and life crowned with martyrdom and ambiguity of statements and moments demands long consideration to confront them with our imagination about what is good and what is bad”. (J. Gorski. *Korczak jakiego znac nie chcemy*. <Lewicowo/pl/Korczak-jakiego-znac-nie-chcemy> Retrieved April 15, 2013)

The most popular modern view of Korczak is the one frozen in bronze monuments or memorial busts. The real one, with his peculiar views, would rather not be a man that is constantly invited to breakfast television programs or talk shows to say a few words on modern education, because he wouldn’t be one to just nod in agreeance with everything.

In March of 1942, in his letter to Gustaw Wielikowski, Korczak wrote: “I was rowdy not only at the gate, for three months now I have been shouting in the whole neighborhood.

Now I have got countless enemies, because no one likes the loud mouth and sharp tongue of a bald grouch.” (J. Korczak. *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta*, s. 179)

So those who are conformists certainly wouldn’t have obtained acceptance from the Old Doctor. Opportunistically turning a blind eye to uncomfortable matters wouldn’t be understood by him: “... Wherever a bruise or a bump on the head was to be found, there I was”. (J. Korczak. *Ghetto Diary*, p. 82); “At the institution at Dzielna Street run by the City Council, they look at me with shock and disgust when I shake hands with the charwoman, even when she happens to be scrubbing the stairs and her hands are wet. But frequently I forget to shake hands with Dr. K., and I have not been responding to the bows of Drs. M. and B. I respect honest workers. To me their hands are clean and I hold their opinions in high esteem. [...] The collector of money, a rude woman, is nobody to me. Mr. Lejzar is fine fellow though he digs in the filth or the sewage pipes and canals.” (J. Korczak. *Ghetto Diary*, p. 181-182)

Straightforwardness, directness and sincerity that ignore the conventions and “what is appropriate” were Korczak’s pivotal qualities. Who would like to consort with a man with such undesirable features?

Tadeusz Zychiewicz, well-known Polish theologian and journalist, during the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Korczak’s birth, said bluntly: “You can endow a Korczak Congress once for a several years and on this occasion issue some postage stamps or even erect a monument. But after all let’s say honestly: No institution, no school would let him over their threshold”. (T. Zychiewicz. *Zywoty T. 2, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska*, 1989, s. 238)



We Are Not the Korczak Pioneers, or Who Was George Scheinman?

By Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo

Our Association has been on the Canadian horizon for more than ten years now. However there were others who had introduced Korczak to Canada much earlier. They spread the word about Korczak and fostered recognition for his life and his teachings, whenever and wherever it was possible.

To the best of my knowledge, one of the first to spread awareness about Dr. Goldszmit, was Yerahmiel Wajngarten (1902 – 1982), Korczak's assistant at the Home for Orphans and deputy-editor of the gazette *Mały Przegląd* (*The Little Review*).¹ He mentioned his mentor in a book written in Yiddish *A velt in flamen, milkhome iberlebung* (*The World in Flames. The War Experience*) that was published in Montreal as early as in 1942 and printed with the financial help of "a group of the author's friends from New York who came from his native town Sierpc, Poland." Wajngarten is also the author of the book *Janusz Korczak, the Jewish Martyr. A Memoir of His Life and Time* (in Yiddish and Hebrew.) Both of these books are difficult to find.

More than thirty years later, in February 1973, professor Teofil Grol published the article *Janusz Korczak – Pedagogue and Humanitarian* in the magazine *Canadian Jewish Outlook*², which helped to further promote this great educator in Canada. From the obituary that had been

placed in *New York Times* on July 6, 1999, I learned that Teofil Grol was a distinguished historian and Yiddish scholar. Born in Warsaw, Poland in 1915, he was a survivor of the ghettos of Warsaw, Brest Litovsk and Bialystock, and a World War II partisan. After the war, he taught in several colleges in Poland. Following the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign in Poland, he emigrated to France and settled in Paris. Author of several historical works in Yiddish, Prof. Grol wrote the work "Grands Moments de Histoire Juive," and a novel, "C'est Arrive en Pologne." Prof. Grol was also a regular contributor to the Jewish press in Poland, Argentina, South Africa, Canada, etc.

I think when Prof. Grol sent his article about Korczak to Toronto, he intended to familiarize Canadians with Korczak's legacy. He described Korczak's educational concept, his views on the social system and ethics in the historical context. He certainly touched upon the theme of Korczak's heroism, presenting one of the versions of his so-called legend – the last march of Korczak and his children to *Umschlagplatz*, and his encounter with the Nazi officer there: "This was man's challenge to the beast – the wild fascism of the Nazi genocidal crime. So overpowering was his presence that the beast began to waver. The murderers started to salute in awe. The pompous S.S. officer lowered his whip and in astonishment asked 'Who is that man?'"

¹ According to Ch. L. Fox *100 Years of Yiddish and Hebrew Literature in Canada*, Y. Wajngarten "was one of the chief co-workers in Janusz Korczak's orphanage."

² An English supplement to the Yiddish newspaper *The Vochenblatt*; the publication has a "socialist-humanist" perspective. *Outlook* was the only Canadian publication devoted to Yiddishkeit, Jewish ethical humanism, and Israeli-Palestinian peace, and justice issues.

"And with words that emanated not out of conscience, but from an animal self-instinct of fear for life, he informed Korczak that he was free to leave the execution place. The executioner stood astonished. The victim rejected this 'great generosity.' Korczak with a piercing glare answered

calmly. 'You must think that we both belong to the same breed of animal.' And the old and sick teacher entered the 'ambulance' with 'his' children where they were killed by gas..."

It seems like one of the readers of the magazine responded to Prof. Grol's article, and could not but help sharing with other readers his personal memoirs of Korczak. The article titled *I knew Janusz Korczak* by George Scheinman appeared in the April-May issue (1973) of the journal. Mr. Scheinman was introduced to the readers as "one of many students who assisted Dr. Goldsmith (Korczak) as a voluntary worker in his noble endeavors in the interests of the children of Warsaw."³ Most likely therefore George Scheinman was one of the students (apprentices, known at the Home of Orphans as *bursisci* from Polish word *bursa* – a kind of boarding school) who wanted to pursue their careers in the field of education.

Who was George Scheinman? What was his Polish-Jewish name? Probably, Giora Szejnman or Jerzy Szajman? When did he leave Poland? Did he live (or is still living) in Canada? Most likely, he did, if he used to read the Canadian magazine. If so, in which province and city did he live? This name appeared on the archival *Voters List 1935-1980* with two dates 1949 and 1972 in Ontario. Was he, however, the same 'Korczak's' George Scheinman? What was his profession? Did he write or publish any other material on his work with Korczak? The author did not give us any clue that can help solve the puzzle.

One more detail that leads me to the next guess: George Scheinman's article was illustrated by the masthead of Korczak's children newspaper *The Little Review* (George called it *The Little Chronicle*.)

³ The author used this anglicized version of Henryk Goldszmit's first and last name

Wychodzi co piątek rano

KORRESPONDENCJE I MA-
TERIAŁ KIEROWAĆ NALEŻY
DO REDAKCJI

„MAŁEGO PRZEGLĄDU”
Nowolipki 7.

The masthead reads: **The Little Review** weekly. Published every Friday morning. Letters and other materials please send to the Editors. Address: 7 Nowolipki St.

It can be assumed therefore, that he worked at this gazette as well. This makes it possible to surmise that this illustration was provided by the author of the article himself. It is unlikely that in 1973 it was found in the journal's archives. However it is more than likely that a young correspondent, when leaving Poland, took with him an issue or two of his favorite newspaper; a memento of his youth.

Unfortunately, it would seem that there is nobody here in Canada whom I can ask. Maybe there is still hope that someone will read my article, respond and give me a hint.

You may ask why it is so important to know all this. Because Korczak's life was devoted to the lives of other's. The lives of Korczak's pupils mirror his life and principles of education which they experienced first hand.

George Scheinman's article had been written in a very personal manner. He knew Korczak just as he knew The Home for Orphans and Krochmalna Street of the old days.



Although the author let slip some inaccuracies and exaggerations, his naïve and idealistic image of Korczak won readers' hearts.

It cannot be otherwise when someone recalls his beloved teacher after so many years.

Below we reprint G. Scheinman's article.

I Knew Janusz Korczak

By George Scheinman

Janusz Korczak was known and loved by thousands of children by his real name of Dr. Henry Goldsmith.

Dr. Goldsmith came from a middle-class academic family. He was a distinguished man, tall, slightly bald at the forehead, and wore a neatly-trimmed beard and moustache. He wore a mandarin-style smock and always seemed to have his hands tucked into his belt.

Warsaw was confronted with the tragic situation of thousands of orphans who were the victims of wars, pogroms and starvations. Dr. Goldsmith, who dearly loved all children, could not bear to see these children left to a plight of poverty and extinction. He felt compelled to save them. So, with great personal sacrifice, he began his orphanage.

Krochmalna was a plain, ordinary street in Warsaw amid factories, a few working-class homes and a very big brewery across from which was Krochmalna 92. This was Dr. Goldsmith's dream turned reality. It was a beautiful and well-designed building with a front garden and a playground in the back.

Due to lack of funds Dr. Goldsmith could not employ too much help so the responsibilities were divided among the children. He introduced a constitution and developed a democratic self-government within the home. The children elected their representatives to parliament and senate and appointed judges. There was full participation. The children even had their own newspaper to report all activities.

Dr. Goldsmith was a very mild, tender man. When he would smile his approval at the children's progress, they would drape themselves around him laughing, and he would rejoice knowing that it was a sign of their good health. If a child lost a tooth, Goldsmith would tell him in all seriousness that his tooth was needed for his studies. The child would be very proud to contribute to science.

Dr. Goldsmith created an atmosphere in his home where each child's potential was developed to the fullest in music, poetry, drama, writing and art. Great interest was shown by many distinguished artists who gave their time voluntarily to work with the children. Dr. Goldsmith watched with pride the success of his children in all their cultural activities.

These children had something many did not have – the love and understanding of a great man who was able to bring out the best in each child. From this they learned a sense of justice and fair play, assisting each other when in need.

The children needed a summer home badly. The doctor picked the site of Waver Anin, about 20 miles from Warsaw, and there pitched tents. Hiking, swimming and other games were carried on for the summer.

One day the happy procession went for a hike with the Doctor in the lead. A youngster picked



up a handful of wheat. A guard noticed it and arrested the child for smuggling. (This was under German occupation.) Dr. Goldsmith demanded his release and the boy was freed immediately.

Upon their return to Krochmalna 92 at the end of the summer, the sad news circulated that Dr. Goldsmith was being called to the war. The children were shocked and the home was filled with sadness.

Miss Stepha Wilchinska took over the supervision of the home while the children hoped and waited for the Doctor's return. On his homecoming Dr. Goldsmith was able to transform the senseless butchery of the war into stories for the children – one in particular of a horse who refused to go to war.

Dr. Henry Goldsmith wrote under the pen name of Janusz Korczak. In his small room

in the attic he wrote many children's books including *King Mathew the First*, *Jushki*, *Jaski*, *Frankie*, and *The Child from the Street*.

He also published a national weekly paper for young people called *Maly Pszeglad* or *Little Chronicle*. Youth from all over the world contributed to this paper.

Janusz Korczak received many awards for his outstanding literary works. His lectures on children were very popular, and people would come from far and near to listen, learn, or just to see this great humanitarian.

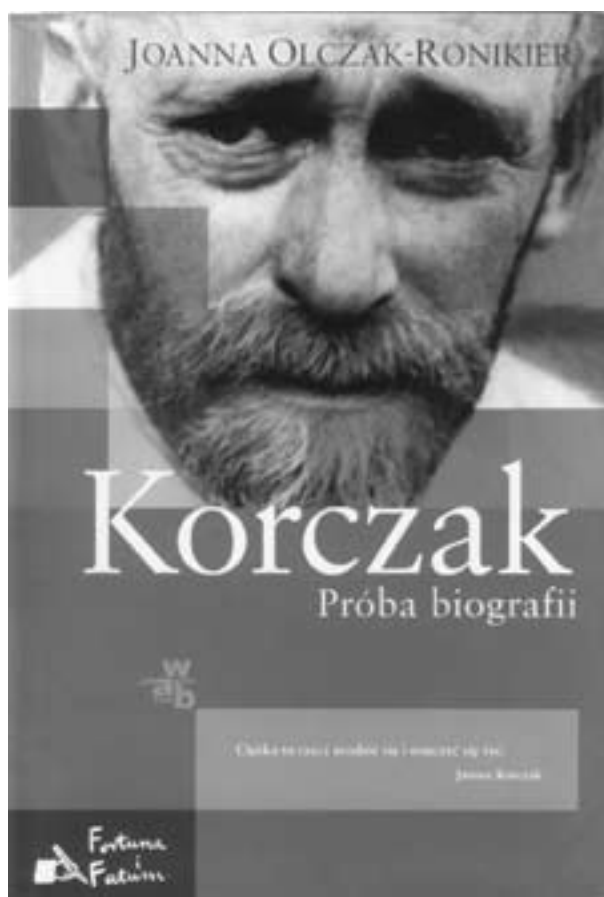
Having known Janusz Korczak, I consider him the greatest human being that ever was. He saved so many lives and in the end he gave his own.

Source: *Canadian Jewish Outlook*
April-May 1973 vol. 11, no 4, p. 9.

Joanna Olczak-Ronikier. *Korczak. Próba biografii*. Seria *Fortuna i Fatum* / *Korczak. An Attempt at Biography*. Warsaw: W.A.B Publisher, 2011, 479 p. In Polish.

Prising Open a Legend's Bronze Armour

Reviewed by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo



Janusz Korczak's life has been the subject of quite a few books, large and small. The most popular among English speaking readers is the biography *The King of Children* penned by an American author, Betty Jean Lifton. First published in 1988, it has been reprinted a number of times and has played a major role in the dissemination of Korczak's life and legacy outside of Poland.

In 2012, in the Year of Janusz Korczak, new books and countless articles were released about this outstanding man. However, Joanna Olczak-Ronikier's book was written not for this particular occasion. In her article *The Absent "Korczak" Express*¹, she openly declared that she did not like any kind of jubilee-campaigns, including the 'competition' among publishers as to who is going to publish more in time for the anniversary.

Joanna Olczak-Ronikier wrote *Korczak* simply because she could not help writing it. She had been working on this book much longer than just a year or two. The process of finding new materials; familiarizing herself with documents discovered by other scholars; studying the historical and social background of Korczak's life amounts to a massive work of labor, requiring years to complete. To produce a serious Korczak biography, to 'fry' it fast as a pancake? Simply impossible!

It is a difficult task to compile a Korczak biography, since the illusion prevails that everything about him has been already written. Not so – Korczak remains an enigmatic figure, indeed. Even the next generation of researchers will have something left to dissect if they aim to solve the puzzle of this highly complex figure.

¹ *Gazeta Wyborcza* [Pusty pociąg "Korczak"]. July 11, 2012.

The difficulty that arises is that Korczak's legend or, to be more precise, the legend about Korczak as opposed to his real life and death, have become inseparable. Even the oft repeated name "Korczak" has become a signature, whereas Korczak in fact was flesh and blood, not merely a 'signpost'.

One more challenge in telling Korczak's story, is that one cannot omit his philosophy of education. How then to give its due without transforming his biography into a pedagogical treatise? At the same time, how to avoid simplification, when Korczak's philosophy has already been taken apart by educators, piece by piece, to the degree that endless quotations may have lost their meaning?

Every now and then, when I come across Korczak's misunderstood quotations I recall the famous Latin phrase *Mens sana in corpore sano* (A healthy mind in a healthy body), being repeated by all and sundry. Only "all and sundry" forget that this phrase originally meant to be read as *Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano* (What is desirable in life is to have a healthy mind in a healthy body), and that totally changes the meaning of the aphorism. In this context, I myself would like to quote Korczak's Farewell address to his pupils who were about to leave the Home for Orphans: "We have nothing to offer... it is you who has to seek [everything] out, in your own self and in your own efforts." If I could have the power, I would suggest that a license for the citation of Korczak's works be issued or the permission be given for this single quote, just this very one: "We have nothing to offer... it is you who has to seek [everything] out, in *your own* self and in *your own* efforts".

Joanna Olczak-Ronikier wrote Korczak simply because she could not help writing it. Why?

First of all, I would call this work not a life-description (bio-graphy) but life-comprehen-

sion. *To understand* – was what guided the author. *To understand* the man who lived "in between" – in between the epochs, wars, his vocations, professions, ethnicity and identity. *To understand* his loneliness and his desire to be as one with the *heartbeat* of society and his skepticism and pessimism – on the other hand, his extraordinary willpower and his boiling energy. *To understand* the variegated canvas of people who belonged to his circle of friends and colleagues. Yes, he was a man who walked a solitary path, but who despite that, did not dwell in emptiness.

To understand how inextricably the world's history was woven with one human life. *To understand* the process of assimilation and how the Jews grew into the fabric of Polish society. *To understand* Korczak's insistent and utopian (?) belief that one could be a Pole and a Jew at the same time. *To understand* what a double national identity with all its contradictions and conflicts meant to him and how these identities fought with each other, to finally find some reconciliation (not always though).

At the same time, how amazingly rich one could be with these two challenging, even if painful, identities, as long as they could be successfully integrated. And all this against the background of anti-Semitism that pressed on Korczak's heels throughout his entire life. From the time he was just a little boy, wishing to put a cross on his canary's grave, up to 1942 when as a 64-year-old, he marched with his 200 children to *Umschlagplatz*, where all were herded into cattle wagons to their *final destination* Treblinka.

Finally, Olczak-Ronikier could not help writing this book because Korczak's life and history were connected with the history of her own family. Korczak was for her a living image from childhood. Her grandfather Jakub Mortkowicz (1875 – 1931) was his publisher. From 1909



on, Korczak had published his books mostly at the Mortkowicz Publishing House. After the latter's tragic death, Korczak remained a Mortkowicz family friend. In her book *W ogrodzie pamięci* (2001; *In the Garden of Memory: Family Memoir*; translated into English by Antonia Lloyd-Jones in 2005), Joanna Olczak-Ronikier recalled a few instances of Korczak's ties to her family¹.

It is necessary to mention one more important fact: Joanna Olczak-Ronikier is the daughter of Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa (1902 – 1968), who wrote the first biography of Korczak published soon after the Second World War. (This book is also available in English: *Olczak Hanna. Mister Doctor. The Life of Janusz Korczak*. Translated by R. J. Kruk and H. Gresswell, 1965). Hanna's book *Janusz Korczak* was released in 1949, when the world was so different from the one we live in today. Moreover, this book was written seven years before Korczak's *Ghetto Diary* saw the light of day in 1958. Korczak in this work was presented in the spirit of the 1940s: The Old Doctor who lived as a Pole and died as a Jew, Korczak – the hero. It could not be otherwise – after all, the echoes of war still resounded in survivors' minds, Warsaw was still in ruins and the ashes of those who perished were still smouldering. It was a difficult task that Joanna Olczak-Ronikier undertook – discussing Korczak with her own mother, publicly, on the pages of her *Biography*, 'yet to be written'. However, the author of a recent publication, put all her efforts in trying to understand her mother's intention, as she did everything in her power to do so in regard to Korczak.

As the 'spine' of her narration, Olczak-Ronikier chose Korczak's *Ghetto Diary*. Every chapter of her book begins from a certain part of the

Diary. No doubt, it was hard work to turn just a few phrases into an entire chapter, especially when there were so many 'black holes' in between these phrases. (We have to remember that Korczak wrote his last manuscript in the ghetto, sick and exhausted, just a few months up to perhaps days before the deportation.)

The author drew the material for reconstruction from various sources: Korczak's books, where she found some snippets of his personal life; his correspondence with friends and pupils; the recollections written by his contemporaries, and a real thesaurus of information such as articles in newspapers and magazines. Another useful source of data was Korczak's *Collected Works* with its extensive commentaries, and the documents preserved in the *Korczakianum* archives in Warsaw. When the facts, Olczak-Ronikier had managed to collect, proved to be insufficient, she filled the gaps with her family history: "My family and Korczak walked the same paths since they were young. They shared the principle that no one is free from their responsibility for the history they witness, that life is worth living only if it is a creative venture, and they are engaged in making the world a better place", Ronikier explained.

The author wrote about other families as well, even if their paths had not been crossed with Korczak's but their lives had been lived in the same orbit. Thus Korczak's Warsaw became inhabited by many people who had different ideals. However, what they had in common was the belief in the possibility of Polish–Jewish coexistence.

In her book, Olczak-Ronikier embraced topics, which other authors carefully stayed clear of, such as sickness and the death of Korczak's father or Korczak's first sexual encounter, as well as the disappointment that followed. The author also touched on Korczak's complicated relationship with Stefania Wilczynska and con-

¹ A few fragments from this book, translated by Malgorzata Burczycka and Marta Burczycka, were published in our Newsletter No 3, 2005.



Korczak's publisher Jakub Morkowicz with his wife Janina. 1901

troversies with Maryna Falska that resulted in his resignation from the work at the orphanage "Our Home". Consequently, Olczak-Ronikier discussed such matters as Korczak's trip to Palestine and his decision not to stay there for good, as well as his decision to leave his job as editor at *The Little Review*; his move from the Home for Orphans to a private residence; his participation in masonry, and so on. The author presented all these matters lucidly and with tact.

Following the basic constructs of the specific genre that reconstructive biography is, Olczak-Ronikier dovetailed her own assumptions and questions into this intimate palimpsest. The discourse therefore takes on the resonance of a dialogue between the two authors, one a researcher and the other, a narrator. Here in the fabric of two voices, doubts sown are more crucial than judgements, for doubts sown are more trustworthy.

Within the text of the book the author explained most matters that usually are the subject of reviewers' comments: the aim, the sources and the questions that remained unanswered. Nothing was left to be 'decoded'. Except one, main theme: Who was Janusz Korczak? Indeed, Olczak-Ronikier's book about Korczak is a Biography, 'yet to be written'.

Some authors raise monuments to Korczak; others eagerly push him off the pedestal. Joanna Olczak-Ronikier places all her knowledge, life experience, artistry, and talent in order to *understand* what kind of heart was beating when prising open the legend's bronze armour.

Inspiracje Korczakowskie. Wokół 'Prawideł życia' w 80. rocznice wydania / Inspired by Korczak: About 'Rules of Life' on the 80th Anniversary of Its Publication. *Psychology and Pedagogy Series nr. 158.* Ed. by Z. Rudnicki. Adam Mickiewicz University Press, Poznań, 2011. 236 p. In Polish.

Through Diversity towards Dialogue

Reviewed by Galina Sanaeva



The scholarly publication *Inspired by Korczak: About 'Rules of Life' on the 80th Anniversary of Its Publication* was published as the debut in the series “Books about Books — Unveiling Ideas”. The comment on the book cover explains: “The idea was to analyze in a thorough and versatile manner the important pedagogical texts, within a modern context”.

Dr. Zbigniew Rudnicki, professor at the Faculty of Education at the Adam Mickiewicz University, is the editor and author of the introduction and conclusion. The book is illustrated with archival photographs of the manuscript of *Rules of Life* as well as photos of Korczak with children at his Home for Orphans. *Inspired by Korczak...* is addressed to everyone interested in Korczak’s legacy: students and instructors of education studies and psychology, social workers, pedagogues, and sociologists.

This publication is of special interest since the object of the analysis and interpretation is not the whole body of Korczak’s legacy, but a particular book. Certainly, *Inspired by Korczak...* represents a fresh approach to his works.

The review of “books about books” is a very specific genre because it provides an analysis of reflections on the source. In this review we explore the text of the interpretation; in other words, we conduct an analysis of the derivative. This kind of review is unusual because it studies the secondary intertextual connections and appears almost like simulacrum.

Along with being an author of pedagogical works (*How to Love a Child, The Child’s Right to Respect*), Janusz Korczak is known for his novels, essays, *Ghetto Diary* and books for children (*King Matt the First, Kaytek the Wiz-*

ard). Korczak's *Rules of Life* (1929) as well as the rest of his pedagogical works is very different in comparison with the works of other pedagogues. *Rules of Life* is written in a simple, almost naive manner. There are certain expectations from an average pedagogical book: We are looking for explanations and advice, and guidance on parenting. Books on pedagogy should indeed educate, but Korczak has his own personal strategy".

In his best known book *How to Love a Child*, Korczak reflects: "How, when, how much – why? I am presentiment of many questions awaiting answers, of doubts seeking explanation. And my answer is: "I do not know"¹. Korczak observes, thinks out loud, and invites the reader to share his thoughts. The purpose of Korczak's works is to involve both the professional educators and parents in a dialogue. *Rules of Life* has the subtitle *Education for youth and adults*. Cited by Janusz Korczak, the ancient Greek aphorism "Gnothi seauton" ("Know thyself") shows the universal foundation of his pedagogy, where everyone should make decision and choices individually.

Ironically, in *Rules of Life* there are no rules: Korczak doesn't teach his reader how to live. The unusual structure of the book deserves special attention. He based his work on multiple antitheses that present the ambivalence of the essence of each and every phenomenon examined by the author: House – Apartment, Rich – Poor, Thoughts – Feelings, Nice – Nasty, Merits – Demerits, Boys – Girls.

We can see the antitheses or alternatives on the very first page of *Rules of Life*: "Mom is kind, happy or cranky, or sad, well or ill. Mom allows, gives, or forbids; wants or doesn't want. Later

you will see other mothers, not only your own, and learn that there are moms who are young, cheerful, smiling, or anxious, tired, overworked, well-educated or not at all, rich and poor, in hat or in headscarf."

In the introduction, the editor Rudnicki tells us his own story about how he learned about Korczak's ideas. Together with details of the editor's life experience, it gives a personal touch to the book and prepares the reader for a varied perspective of Korczak's legacy. What is the book about?

Inspired by Korczak. About 'Rules of Life' on the 80th Anniversary of Its Publication consists of 15 writings on psychology (P.Gasiarek, S. Futyma, M. Buchnat), pedagogy (E. Kozdrowicz, A. Wiza), and sociology (K. Czykier, K. Sawicki, M. Budajczak). Some articles combine a historical aspect with psychology, pedagogical studies and sociology (J. Nowicki, P. P. Grzybowski, E. Bielecka, A. Nowicka, Z. Rudnicki). For instance, a historical excursus on the issue of "street pedagogy" is discussed in Grzybowski's article *Rules of Life. Back Yard, Garden and ...* (p. 61). A serendipitous juxtaposition is the next article of E. Bielecka *Children of the Street in Korczak's Times vs Street Children Nowadays*, in which the author unveils the situation of "street children" in modern Poland. In the book we can also find articles on feminist theory (I. Chmura-Rutkowska) and practical psychology (T. Bajkowski). In the article *To Have or/and to Be. On Counting Out Time*, Z. Rudnicki shows the sociological and philosophical aspect of Korczak's legacy. To all appearances, the authors of the articles are specialists in particular areas of studies, but unfortunately, the book doesn't provide any additional information beyond the universities they are affiliated with.

All the articles explore diverse topics, and each is unique in its own way. E. Kozdrowicz's article

¹ *Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. Translated by J. Bachrach. Warsaw, 1967. S. 93.*



Nice – Awful, The Perspective of Child and Teacher stands out as one of the most convincing interpretations of Korczak’s *Rules of Life*, in which the author examines one particular “rule” of Korczak’s book in the modern context. The author is trying to understand what it means to be a “good” teacher (adult, friend), by classifying answers of children aged 10 to 12 on the questions “what is it to be bad”, “who is a bad friend”, “what you don’t like in others”. E. Kozdrowicz compares the answers of the children with Korczak’s definition and comes to the conclusion that the task of the “rule” – at first glance, simple – described in Korczak’s book as “Nice – Awful” was to show teachers what factors influence the psychology of “being popular,” which impact self-esteem and behavior in society. E. Kozdrowicz carefully examines the role of the modern teacher and gives her own set of rules for being a good teacher.

While the authors of some articles consider Korczak’s ideas in relation to modern reality, others stay focused on the specific concepts linked to *Rules of Life* only formally and do not reflect on the gist of Korczak’s philosophy. In those cases, the authors develop the topic, but *Rules of Life*, along with Korczak’s interpretation, is only used as material for random citations or an epigraph. This is in contrast to the original idea of the entire publication, where the main point should be related to Korczak and his philosophy.

A few authors tend to find a link between Korczak’s *Rules of Life* and various philosophic theories. On one hand, this indicates the extensive knowledge of the authors and expands the potential of interpretation; on the other hand, an endeavor to link the stylistically simple text of Korczak with a variety of complex theories is often unreasonable. Moreover, the abundance of citations from diverse fields of knowledge overshadows the main idea of the articles.

Written 84 years ago, *Rules of Life* is contemporary because it teaches us tolerance, respect, freedom of self-expression, and inner freedom. *Rules of Life* is simple and universal; that’s why this thin book of only 100 pages is able to attract specialists of such different fields of study and to be a topic for discussion for various disciplines such as social psychology, history, gender studies and many others. The book is as versatile as Korczak was himself, whose areas of interest were not only pedagogy and medicine, but also psychology and children’s rights.

Likewise, the *Rules of Life* scholarly publication, *Inspired by Korczak...*, closes with short conclusions by editor Zbigniew Rudnicki.

Inspired by Korczak... presents a variety of interpretations of an unusual pedagogical text. Every author looks closely into Korczak’s work in an individual way, every article shows a range of aspects of *Rules of Life*, and together they make up a kaleidoscope of opinions. The theme of this book about Korczak’s work sufficiently corresponds with the source, *Rules of Life*, where Korczak demonstrated his devotion to the principle of freedom of opinion and dialogue. The possibility of carrying on free discussion and exchanging opinions allows us to expand our own horizon of knowledge and see the problem from different sides. In Canadian society, diversity is a basic value, which means respect for others, dialogue, and as a result, progress and productivity.

We are looking forward to having in hand the second volume of the “Books about Books – Unveiling Ideas” series dedicated to Korczak’s *Ghetto Diary*, which is expected to be a no less fascinating read.

Janusz Korczak. Fotobiografia / Janusz Korczak. Photobiography. Concept, selection of Korczak's quotations and graphic design by Maciej Sadowski. Consultation on the subject with Marta Ciesielska. Warsaw: Iskry, 2012. 191 p. In Polish and English.

Images of Truth

Reviewed by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo

"Photographs cannot create a moral position, but they can reinforce one – and can help build a nascent one."

"The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say: "There is the surface. Now think – or rather feel, intuit – what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way."

Susan Sontag. *On Photography*



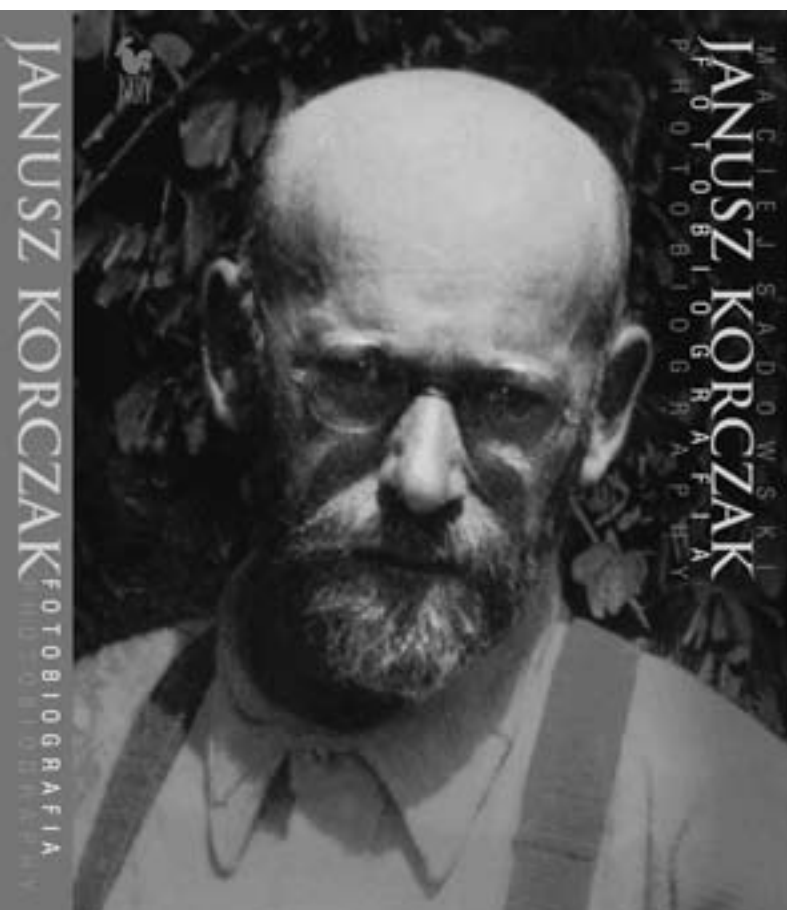
Ill. 1

The book *Janusz Korczak, Photobiography* published during the year of the celebration of life and legacy of this great man is a special one; an album printed on elegant, high quality paper with a hard cover, a beautiful dust jacket, and a silk bookmark – it beckons as a wonderful gift for many of Korczak's followers and admirers.

The album, which was created by Maciej Sadowski, an artist and researcher, is the second undertaking of his in the same unique genre – a biography shown through photographs. The first was a *Marie Skłodowska-Curie* album, which was published in Warsaw in 2011. Both of these volumes are the author's true labours of love.

I was pleasantly surprised that Maciej Sadowski chose for the cover of a new book not Korczak's iconic photograph taken by Edward Poznanski in the 1930's (the image which, unfortunately, was overused by the designers of numerous books on the Old Doctor (Ill. 1)), instead, the author opted for a different picture taken in Palestine in 1934, which actually is an enlarged fragment of the group photo of Korczak with former residents of the Home for Orphans (Ill. 2). This lesser known photo simply asks the reader to take a closer look. Isn't this a wonderful idea?!

Over one hundred images were included in the album. Working on the selection, Maciej Sad-



III. 2

owski collected an even larger number of them, which must have been quite an undertaking. Impressive indeed is the list of institutions that the author dug through in order to gather these pictures: The Museum of History of the City of Warsaw and its chapter *Korczakianum* – The Korczak Centre for Research and Documentation, along with the Emmanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Ghetto Fighters' Museum in Israel, Polish National Library, Warsaw Public Library, and the Archives of the Warsaw Atheneum Theatre.

The photos are arranged according to chronology, typical for Korczak's biographies: 1878 – 1904, 1905 – 1918, 1919 – 1931, 1932 – 1939, 1939 – 1942, thus portraying childhood, university years, work as a pediatri-

cian and later on as director of the Home for Orphans. His publications and social activities were mentioned, as well as his military service during the wars and ultimately, the tragic events of WWII.

The Korczak iconography is not a field of my expertise and I would not dare to judge whether the collection of the pictures presented in the album is exhaustive. No doubt, however, both – the most representative and those familiar only to a small group of Korczak specialists – were included in the album.

The way that Maciej Sadowski used the iconographic material shows his unquestionable refined artistic taste and fluency in modern phototechnology. He remastered the old photographs (the earliest of which, the post card of Warsaw, is dated around 1870) with utmost care and respect. Many are shown in full size along with enlarged fragments – a technique that invites the readers to give their all to each detail of the picture. I assume this is the first time such an opportunity was afforded.

Among the photographs presented in the book, there are the portraits that had been taken by professionals, some most likely in the studio, such as a the ten year-old Henryk Goldszmit (later Janusz Korczak), a well known picture that had been used as a frontispiece in the original edition of the book *King Matt*, as well as in most of the following editions. Then, Korczak's portrait boasting the student's uniform of Warsaw Imperial University, another from the 1920s and one later from the 1930s. Finally, we behold one taken for the questionnaire completed on the order of the occupants in September of 1940. That is all. Maybe Korczak didn't like to be photographed, just as he didn't like to be interviewed or be in the centre of public attention...

Other than those few, in the album there are pictures of Korczak with his colleagues and



III. 3

friends. One with his fellow educators at the summer camp of Wilhelmowka in 1908 (most likely, this excellently ‘staged’ photo was taken by an amateur (Ill. 3).) The other one: Korczak among the members of the *Help the Orphans* Association, with his close friends Isaac and Stella Eliasbergs (1918). Unfortunately, Stella (wife of the President of this Association, and after his death its Vice-President) was wrongly indicated on the picture; Stefania Wilczynska (who was, along with Korczak, a key figure at the Home for Orphans) was not indicated at all (Ill. 4). Yet another photo: Korczak with Maria Grzegorzewska and other professors at the Institute of Special Education (1925/1926) whose names are unknown but whose faces tell their own tale. Finally another photograph

of Korczak with Isaac Eliasberg and Stefania Wilczynska (Ill. 5).

Photobiography provides graphic evidence of Korczak’s time as well: The portrayal of the city of Warsaw that Korczak loved so dearly, the University library where he spent long hours preparing for the exams, the Children’s Hospital where he started his first job as a physician, the street cars, which he may have run for in order to make it to the Home for Orphans or to Our Home (an orphanage for Polish, non-Jewish children) on time, or perhaps to meet with a publisher or start talk at a radio station... There are also images of other European capitals where he continued his studies in both medicine and education. Then, the images of the Russo-Japanese



Ill. 4. I took the liberty of indicating with an arrow Stefania Wilczynska and Stella Eliasberg. The latter was originally identified wrongly. Stella is the second from right in the second row in big brim hat

war (1905) where Korczak would for the first time be witness to the horror of destruction. His destiny was to experience the terror of war not once, not even twice, but four times.

Even more insight into the atmosphere and style of the era is provided by inclusion in the album covers of the original edition of Korczak's books and magazines where he published his stories in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s.

However the most precious photographs in the album are those that present Korczak with children. Simple, spontaneous and authentic, they were taken by amateurs, most likely Korczak's young assistants or former residents of the Home for Orphans who just seized the mo-

ment and clicked the shutter. In these photos, Korczak is surrounded by Jewish children and Polish ones, some of them happy and joyful, the others serious or just quiet – each picture of the individual. Korczak is rarely the focal point of these pictures (Ill. 6, 7, 8). Sometimes it is even hard to find him, hidden in the corner of this crowd of kids. To look at these photos over and over again is a sheer delight. At the same time, it is painful, as so many of the children in these shots perished during the Holocaust. We look at their young faces and see the grim face of history awaiting Polish Jews during WWII.

Captions for the pictures are borrowed from Korczak's works: from his *Ghetto Diary*, *How*



III. 5

to love a Child, An Educator's Prayer, as well as from his letters to his former pupils and Commemorative Postcards handwritten by him that residents of the Home for Orphans received for their achievements. These highly apt comments perfectly complement the photographs. Such a precise 'montage' results in capturing the authentic image of Korczak.

The album is a bilingual Polish-English edition. A welcome addition, indeed. It could make for interesting reading not only for Korczak scholars (who for the most part know Polish) but also for those about to embark upon their maiden voyage for Korczak's world. This is especially important, as Korczak's life and heritage are not very widely known in English-

speaking countries, both in the US and even less so in Canada. The album was therefore a great opportunity to disseminate Korczak's ideas "across the wide seas". However, in order to achieve this goal, high quality English translation was a must. With regret, I have to admit that the translation is a far cry from the required standard; it is, in fact, the weakest point of the whole publication.

No efforts were made to adapt English captions for the non-Polish readership. This is especially true of the Calendar of Korczak's life, which was placed at the end of the book. The mediocre and sometimes awkward translation becomes an obstacle between Korczak and those readers who are not familiar with



III. 6

the educator's ideas and realities of life in Poland in the first half of the 20th century. Meanwhile, just a few additional words would provide the reader a useful hint resulting in perfectly understandable and less confusing wordings.

Moreover, there are some absolutely unacceptable mistakes that surprise or even shock the reader. For example: in a very important note from Korczak's *Ghetto Diary* about the authors who would have influenced him a great deal, forming his social views and literary work, he wrote: "Of all writers, I owe the most to Chekhov – a brilliant diagnostician and social clinician". In the English translation, however, the famous Russian novelist

Anton Chekhov, (a name which is recognizable for the English-speaking reader) becomes Czechowicz! Jozef Czechowicz (1903 – 1939) was an avant-garde Polish poet, known for his catastrophic and oneiric vision. Czechowicz died tragically, a few days after WWII had started, on September 9, 1939, during the bombardment of downtown Warsaw. In such a case readers in the USA or Canada would be helpless even with *Wikipedia* at their fingertips!

Unnecessary misunderstandings are also caused by inconsistent attempts to translate Polish names into English. Having introduced Henryk Goldszmit (the real name of Janusz Korczak) as Henry on the initial pages of the

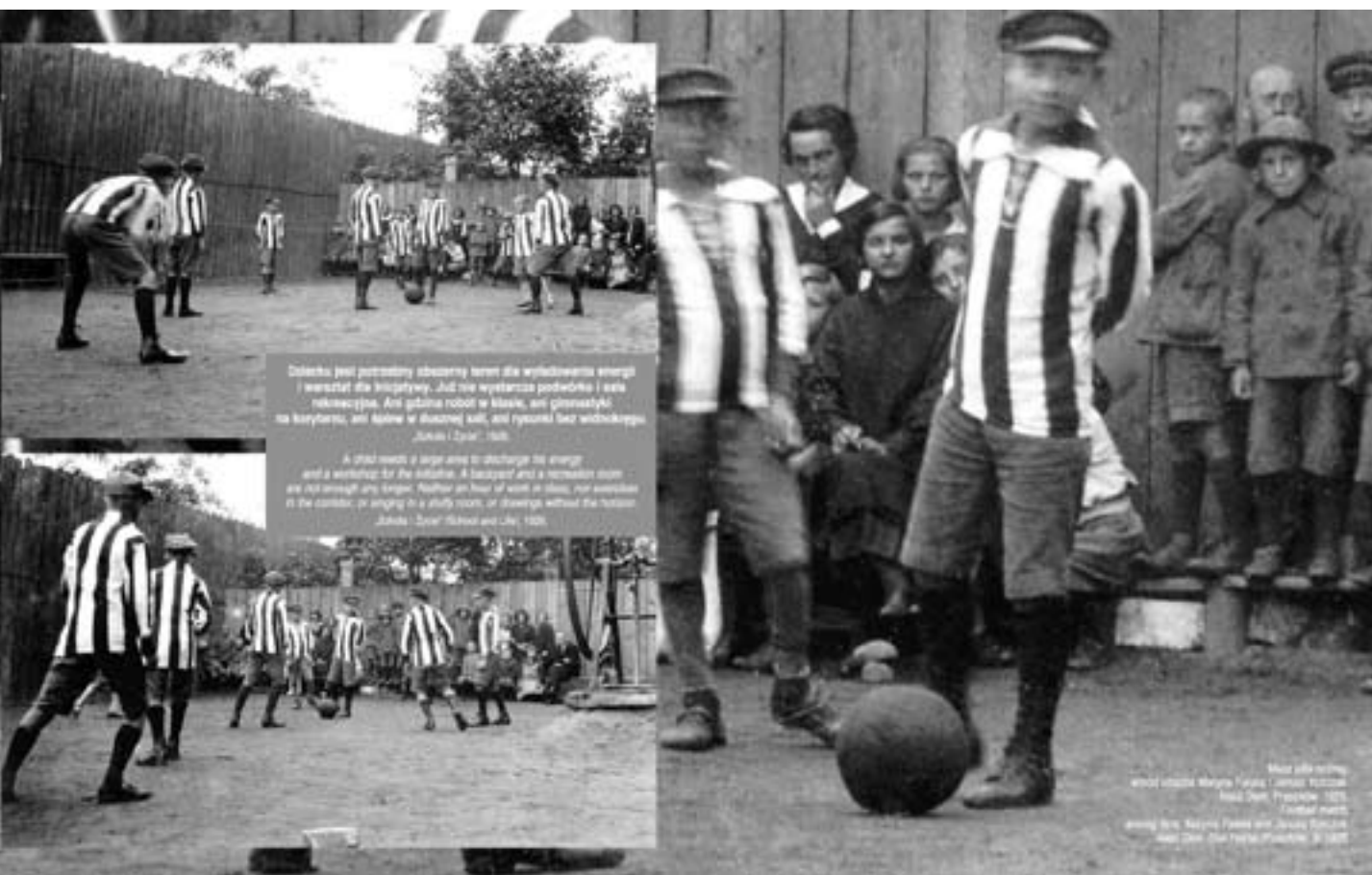


III. 7

book, the translator dropped this idea later on and returned to the traditional, “old-fashioned” original spelling of the names, customary in English translation of Polish literature, forgetting to correct the spelling that had been used on previous pages. Let’s assume that the English-speaking readers are smart enough to guess that Henry and Henryk is the same person (as are Jozef and Joseph or Izaak and Isaac) but what is the point of making them focus on solving this or other similar puzzles distracting them from the *animus* of the book and its narration: the thoughts and deeds of Janusz Korczak? Is there any reason to disorient the readers, providing them different translations of the titles of Korczak’s books on different pages?

Moreover, why not decide which name of his Orphanage is more relevant, at least out of respect for Korczak, instead of offering three versions of the name of the same institution? In summary, the English-speaking reader of the album may well become involved in the process of translation instead of enjoying the fruits of its labours. Is this a new idea for a reality show in book format? In the context of a truly important book such as this, one intended to be taken seriously?!

Alas, when the reader has the book in hand, the appropriate time to correct inaccuracies and mistakes or in fact to attach *Errata* has come and gone. In any case, it is not up to the reviewer to make the relevant corrections. Rather,



III. 8

it is a matter of foregone opportunity not seized upon by the editor and proofreader upon whose embarrassed shoulders responsibility squarely rests.

Having studied Korczak's heritage for a good many years, I have come across many depictions of him: oil paintings, graphics, drawings, bas-reliefs and even monuments. No doubt, each in its own way tells a story, but I have to confess that these images did not help me much to establish a real dialogue with Korczak. What was extremely helpful, though, was a close look at the old faded photographs of this extraordinary thinker. Maciej Sadowski, in his *Photobi-*

ography, has granted me this opportunity. For the first time I have truly seen the eyes of a man who once said: "There are no children – only people".

In September 2012, the album *Photobiography* was awarded *The Warsaw Literary Premiere* prize. During the ceremony, laudation was given by Józef Hen, a former reporter from Korczak's children's newspaper, *The Little Review*, who is nowadays a recognized author. Wojciech Pszoniak, a famous Polish actor who played Korczak in Andrzej Wajda's movie, recited selected parts of the text from the album as well.

Pamiętnik Blumki / Blumka's Journal. Written and illustrated by Iwona Chmielewska. Designed by Dorota Nowacka. Warsaw: Media Rodzina, 2011. 63 p. In Polish.

A Message from the Past

Reviewed by Yakov Medvedev, a 12th Grade student of St. George's High School in Vancouver

It is not difficult to see the value of children's books because literature helps shape both imagination and knowledge, as well as shows new perspectives and ways to approach the world. The challenging part is getting these new and interesting ideas across to children in a manner that will remain with them.

Iwona Chmielewska, who is a renown and critically acclaimed Polish author and illustrator of children books, in her *Blumka's Journal* tells the story of a girl who lives in Janusz Korczak's Orphanage. More often than not, books about Korczak and the children that he supervised, are set during the dark times of the Holocaust. Naturally, this is a onerous path to choose for a children's novel, as the author would then have to expose the young reader to the atrocities that occurred in that period of history. Iwona Chmielewska however, choses an alternate route. Instead, she focuses on the upbringing of children at the Orphanage and their life there in a happier time. It's worth emphasizing that Korczak himself is not the primary character in this picture book. The perspective of a child what the Iwona Chmielewska's story is about.

The book begins in third person, with a narration that introduces the central personage – Blumka, who keeps a diary. Soon after, she takes over from the narrator. In her notebook, she describes all the different things that went on at Korczak's sanctuary for children. Blumka writes very fondly of Korczak, listing him along with the children at the Orphanage, showing

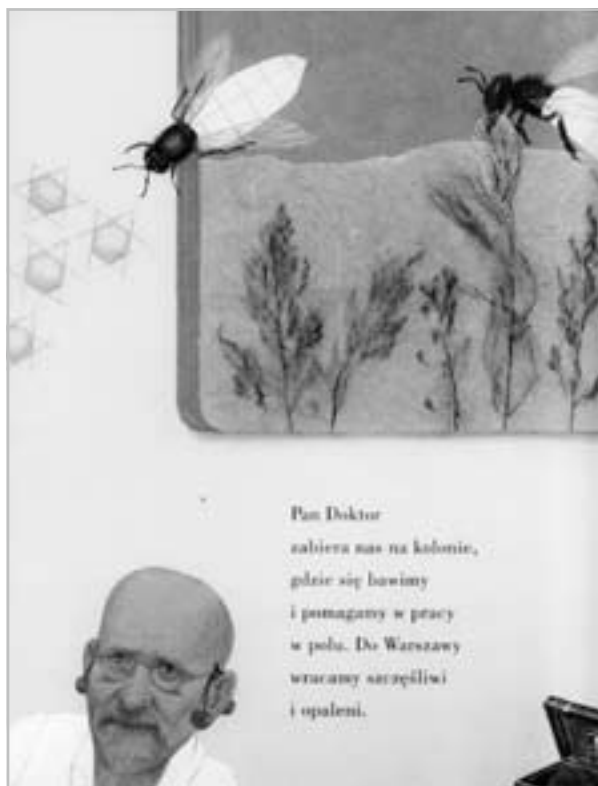


that she looked at him not only as a teacher but also as a friend and someone she could trust. The book describes various values that Korczak tried to instill in the children: in particular, to never harm one another. Furthermore, Blumka depicts the diverse activities that the children of the Orphanage participated in on a daily basis: Some studied, others built furniture or knit clothing, and others played – but what was common to all these activities was that they would do them together and respectfully, a testament to Korczak's wise mentorship.

There were other factors, which contributed to the success of the book as well. First and foremost, the illustrations that brought to life every word that the author wrote. These made it easier for children to understand what was being said, should they have any trouble with the language. The colours of these drawings were also chosen very well, as they gave each illustration a certain glow, perhaps symbolic of the spark of warmth that the events of the story deliver to the reader. The font and arrangement of text is also very well done as it is extremely easy to read and the short sentences are placed so that the drawings surround them, almost as if the reader is thrust into the middle of the story.

This is an enjoyable and well-crafted children's book because of unique take on the subject matter, style of writing and pictures.

The events covered in the story happened just before a trying time in human history and the author depicts moving scenes that displayed



the strength of human spirit. Despite the fact that it is a children's story, this is its message: It is important to use everything one has to the maximum. If there is little food, one should cultivate his/her own crops; if there isn't enough furniture, one can build his/her own, etc.

The book closes with a return to third person. The author writes, "And then came war, which took away Blumka's diary". With this phrase, Iwona Chmielewska foreshadows the tragedy of the World War II as if she prepared her characters for the hardships that they would face and perseverance they would need to show. At the same time, "restored" by Iwona Chmielewska Blumka's diary serves as a memory of better times – and of hope, that one day Korczak's virtues will continue to pass on from child to child, from human being to human being, and the Old Doctor's ultimate goal will be achieved: A world where children are respected.

Tom Lasker. Abenteuer in aller Welt / Tom Lasker. Adventures All Over the World. By Hans Georg Friedmann. Geneve: Fondation Martin Bodmer Biblioteque et Musee. Printed in Geneva in Mai 2012 under the patronage of Association Suisse du Dr Janusz Korczak and Fondation Martin Bodmer. In German.

A Child's World of Justice

Reviewed by Juliana Schneider, a 9th Grade student and E. Kuc-Schneider



Everyone seeks an adventure at some point or another but not everyone has riveting experiences such as Tom Lasker's. The young, brilliant adventurer finds himself caught up amongst smugglers and chasing dangerous gangs along with his friends: Fred Gunball and Loja. The three search for new feats by decoding messages and uncovering mysteries that lead them to placing the bad guys behind bars. The writing in these books provides you with great imagery and sends you on an adventure of your own.

Being someone who has always longed for an adventure these short stories kept me wide-awake and turning the page. Anyone who has

ever tried writing an adventure story will tell you that it is not as easy as you think, but Hans Georg's ideas seemed to simply flow onto the page.

Whilst going through hardships in his life, Hans Georg Friedmann dreamed up Tom Lasker and through his stories served justice to the criminals his characters encountered. I think that these books show the innocence and creativity of this young boy and his hopes and dreams throughout the worst times. Having found my own adventure in these books, I would recommend them to anyone who loves to sit down and be drawn into the plot of a book.

J. Sch



*Hans Georg Friedmann
and his sister Liselotte. C. 1937*

In May 2012, the Association Suisse des Amis du Dr. Janusz Korczak and the Fondation Martin Bodmer, Geneve, released four out of a series of thirteen adventure books written and illustrated by a very young Jewish boy, Hans Georg Friedmann.

Tom Lasker. Abenteuer in aller Welt / Tom Lasker. Adventures All Over the World. [title and volume titles transl. E.K.-Sch.] has been published as a facsimile of the original German version, in the form chosen by the young author – small-size books of 32 pages each with the table of contents on the first page. Placed in an elegant box of cardboard and wood, the four volumes are accompanied by a touching picture of nine year old Hans Georg with his younger sister Liselotte, as well as a trilingual booklet including an introduction to the author by reputable authors: in German by Dr. Waltraud Kerber-Ganse, professor of Education and Social Pedagogy in Göt-

tingen, in English by Batia Gilad, educator and President of the International Korczak Association, and in French by Dr. Daniel Halperin, pediatrician and President of the Swiss Janusz Korczak Association. Throughout the booklet, we find reproductions of the covers of those nine volumes by Friedmann not included in this publication, for reasons I am not familiar with. They give the edition a colourful and beautiful flair and at the same time, are telling evidence of Hans Georg's other artistic skills. The booklet finishes with a poem *Ich sah!* (*I saw!*) by the young author's father, Hugo Friedmann.

In the stories' plot, Tom Lasker is an established New York detective present wherever a crime is committed and the law breached. Tom and his two friends and helpers: Fred Gunball and Loja, take the reader on an exciting trip around the world. Truly stunning is the young author's geographical knowledge: He sends his protagonist to places such as New York (vol. 2: *Der Red-Gang, The Red-Gang*), Aden in Yemen, and Baroda in India (vol. 3: *Die Schmuggler von Baroda, The Smugglers of Baroda*), Sydney (vol. 4: *Die Bande Higgins, The Higgins Gang*), and Chicago (vol. 12: *Der Bandenkrieg, The War of the Gangs*), to mention just a few of them. Plenty of information about people living in those places, their customs and habits, indicate an intelligent author, interested in the world and well-read.

Tom Lasker's Adventures are a thrilling reading. The four volumes turn out to have the good structure of a classic crime book, with an excitingly constructed plot. They maintain a clear demarcation between good and evil, present an orderly world with fair rules in which the good guys win and the bad guys always loose. It is at times hard to believe that these stories envisaging such a clear-cut concept of justice would have been worked out by a boy who was only eleven or twelve when he wrote them.



In the twelfth and last volume we have, the author lists the titles of the previous eleven stories and promises to continue with the series. In vain, however, would one search for more books or more information about the author. Hans Georg was born in 1928 as the son of Hugo Friedmann, the prosperous owner of a textile factory, curator of the Jewish Museum in Vienna, and highly educated citizen. He had received a thorough education, mostly in the intellectual circle of his family, until in 1938 the Friedmanns suffered severe persecution by the Nazis. In the spring of 1945, at the age of sixteen, Hans Georg was murdered, along with his father, in the concentration camp in Dachau. Their death occurred only a couple of months after their wife/mother and daughter/sister had been gassed in Auschwitz. The surviving volumes that we are so pleased to be able to read today, were kept by a housemaid of the family and returned to their relatives after the war.

It is hard to say today if it was the new Nazi reality surrounding this boy of ten years that provided a trigger for him to start writing stories about justice. But they are certainly testament to the substantial literary potential that was “boiling” inside the author and needed to be put on paper.

The release of Tom Lasker’s adventures, evidence of a talent lost forever, is one more testimony for a premature and needless death. This poses once again a crucial question that goes far beyond the geographical and chronological scope of the Second World War: How many talents, without the chance of ever unfolding, have been destroyed and are still being destroyed in all those unnecessary wars “in aller Welt”?

by E. K-Sch.

The poetry of Tymoteusz Karpowicz is often called “difficult” or “impossible.” Considered a Master of Polish “linguistic poetry,” Karpowicz wrote philosophical poems resonant with capacious meaning, symbols, and allusions.

Korczak: The Karpowicz Paradox

By Galina Sanaeva



Tymoteusz Karpowicz (1921 – 2005) was born in a village of Zielona near Vilnius (Lithuania) and is the author of eight books of poetry, several plays, books of literary essays and an anthology, among others.

After the war, he moved to Szczecin, where he worked at a Polish radio station and published his first books of poetry in 1948, *Pomeranian Legends* [*Legendy pomorskie*], and *Living Dimensions* [*Zywe wymiary*]. Later, the poet studied Polish literature at Wrocław University. He became a president of the Polish Writers' Union

in Wrocław and editor of several literary magazines — *Nowe sygnaly*, *Poezja* and *Odra*. When the first was closed down due to his political views, Karpowicz had no choice but to quit the editorial board of the remaining magazines. In 1973 Karpowicz was invited to the University of Iowa for the International Writing Program. In 1978, he took up the position of full professor at the University of Illinois at the Chicago Department of Slavic Languages and Literature from where he retired in 1993. He placed a great deal of effort into promoting Polish literature and culture among Americans by organizing international conferences on Polish poets such as Cyprian Kamil Norwid, Bolesław Lesmian, and Julian Przybós. Also, Karpowicz established the Norwid Society at the University of Chicago and was one of the co-founders of the ambitious intellectual magazine *2B: A Journal of Ideas*.

Karpowicz's poetry is full of paradoxes. Frank Kujawinski, professor at Loyola University Chicago and translator of Karpowicz's poetry, wrote in his essay *About Tymoteusz Karpowicz*: “There is no end to the surprises, to the shocking words, to the sharp verbal turns, to the strange metaphors, the radical shifts of intellect.” (*Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences* Vol. 39 Winter 1993)

The main idea of the “linguistic experiments” of Karpowicz's poetry was to use the traditional meaning of the words in a totally new context. One appropriate example would be the poem *Circle of the Dance of Love* [*Kolo tanca milosnego*]:

and out of love she shed a scarf from her hair
 then shed the hair beyond the scarf
 then what could be recalled of hair
 then what could not now be recalled
 she approached him from all sides of the neck
 then the neck approached the sides
 then the sides approached the neck
 then the sides were without sides
 then the necks were without necks
 she was happy flayed herself of body
 then body flayed of body
 then what could not remember body
 then what remembered nothing
 she was always herself for him
 while not for him she was herself
 while not herself she wasn't for him
 while not for she wasn't her

Translation, Frank Kujawinski

Karpowicz was a person of an extremely broad intellectual horizon. Another area of his interest included the history of philosophy, art, natural sciences, anthropology, and many others. Karpowicz studied everything that existed around him.

The most unusual book the poet published was *The Other Side of the Tree Rings* [*Sloje zadrzewne, 1999*]. This work of complex structure and eclectic genre, consists of 14 parts, ten of which resemble a biblical pattern: Beyond Every Moment, Annunciation, Visitation, Birth, Learning, Studying, Cana of Galilee, Taking, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. Each small cycle consists of even smaller poetic structures named as “original,” “logic calque,” and “artistic copy.” Originals are located on the odd pages, while a few of the artistic copies can be found on the even ones. Up to the tenth cycle the originals also include a few “logic calques” and “parallaxes”¹. Starting from the eleventh part titled *Resolving*

¹ *Parallax is the apparent change in the position of an object resulting from the change in the direction or position from which it is viewed. (Webster's New World Dictionary).*

of *Spaces* [*Rozwiazywanie przestrzeni*], the non-trivial structure of the book becomes even more complex, with trigonometric functions such as sine, cosine, tangent, and so on.

Karpowicz was studying the universe through different angles and looking for new, unknown meanings of existing phenomena. The main point of his poetics was creating something new through studying deeply everything that had been created before and as such, Karpowicz had extremely high expectations of his readers.

Resolving of Spaces part includes topically related poems and their “parallaxes” as aphorisms: Each aphorism expands existing meanings of famous figures in a new, unexpected way. Hence, they, or rather their interpretation, became numbered: Miro II, Mussolini II, Pasteur II. One of these famous figures is Janusz Korczak:

KORCZAK II

my children now are so much more diligent
 than before going up in smoke. They keep on
 having to knock down kites sailing from chim-
 neyed skies perishing in a heaven breathless.

Translation, Richard J. Reisner

KORCZAK II – Polish original

moje dzieci sa teraz jeszcze bardziej zapra-
 cowane niz przed spalaniem ciagle musza
 odrzucac na ziemie dolatujace stamtad latawce
 ktore w niebie gina bez powietrza.

Karpowicz referred to kites sailing as a symbol of Korczak's ideas of importance of dreams and imagination for the children. During his visit to the Ein Harod kibbutz (Israel), Korczak learned how to make kites and enjoyed flying them together with the children. Later he used this symbol of celestial dreams often in his writings. The flying kites became a symbol for the Korczak Memorial Day in Poland and in Israel.



As we know, usually Korczak is depicted as one who happened to live in a world full of atrocities and died in a gas chamber. While in Karpowicz's aphorism he is envisioned in the sky, taking care of the children there as he used to, just as during his life on earth. At the same time, the image of children playing with the kites might be a reflection of the enigmatic dialogue between those alive and those no longer. It can therefore be interpreted as social memory writ large, as a remembrance of the Holocaust.

As we see, the reader has to place considerable intellectual effort in order to find a suitable interpretation of this aphorism with its vast range of meanings.

Thus we have the pleasure of presenting below, other randomly selected snippets of Karpowicz; work that presents an unusual, paradoxical, and sometimes startling aspect of his poetry. Perhaps these short prose poems will help readers better understand – or rather better prepare for – the one, which is of the most importance here.

Korczak II therefore fully demonstrates not only *the enigma* that is Karpowicz, but is equally a testimonial to the fact that Korczak, *sui generis vitae lampada*, lends himself to poetry of any kind. ■

Tymoteusz Karpowicz

APHORISMS AND PARADOXES

Translation, Richard J. Reisner

EMILIA PLATTER II

so as to get a fistful of frozen offal we would walk
at times as far as Siberia

LUCIFER II

out-of-work devils of all countries – hang on to your horns!
soon all the hells of Europe – that means Polish too,
will be warmed by Siberian gas, so there will be work
from hoof to horn

SENDIVOGIUS POLONUS II

examining the tongue of devilish contracts signed
and sealed in Poland I noticed that most mistakes
in spelling were committed by demons scrawling the word
authority

POLISH BREEDER OF POULTRY

here from pillow feathers we try piece by piece to patch
geese up again but they still have no head

**STALIN III**

I asked Nikolaj Marr whether Isaac Babel knows Russian well enough to write his own obituary but he simply shook the head of a well executed writer

KALASHNIKOV II

I only need to see as much light as much as I see the sight

ARMSTRONG II

anticipation must not take longer than squeezing the trigger

SEBYLA II

(Polish poet executed in Katyn II)

I asked Pushkin to turn the pages for me whilst reading *Eugene Onegin* for I cannot move well shovelled over with Katyn soil but replied alas he cannot for he is in similar circumstance too and to top it all, has been commanded to write an account of Peter the Great

CARAVAGGIO II

the law was out for me for killing a man and the light for darkness had its day

ROBESPIERRE III

many a time I asked my beloved poet Andre-Marie Chenier not to sing close to the wind for he may fall seriously foul of throat requiring amputation to save what remains of the genius but for him even I was close to the wind

GOYA III

from time to time I would use brushes with a shaft from gallows wood – they are splendid, only creak appallingly, even in the case of happy colours

**SPARTACUS III**

for two millennia I set out from Vesuvius hillside
so as to strike Rome but it simply retreats north
and Crassus now has the tongue of Russians

CREON III

around my Thebes lie the greatest number yet to be
interred speeches festering

CATHERINE THE GREAT II

mighty states possess borders that one passes only
from within – the weak: whose borders one passes
only from without. The remaining states are but a
gatekeeper for the mighty

IVAN THE TERRIBLE III

when the boyar snores in Novgorod and I hear him
in Moscow – I direct to cut short the ears
of my yeoman

KORCZAK II

my children now are so much more diligent than before
going up in smoke. They keep on having to knock down
kites sailing from chimneyed skies perishing in a heaven
breathless

MORPHEUS II

after sleeping one night in Auschwitz I resigned
from sending dreams down to earth in the form
of humans

WELL

no one is able to sleep deeper well than I

Wroclaw – Iowa City – Chicago – Munich, 1950 – 1978

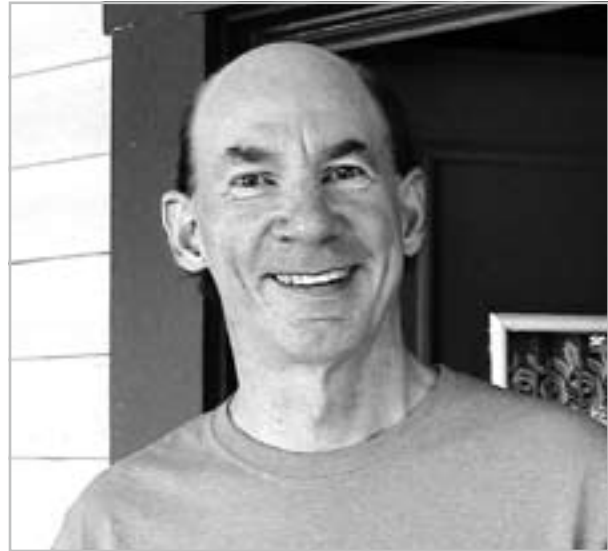


A Korczakian on the Rogue River

Robert M. Weiss was born in Los Angeles, California. He received his bachelors and masters degrees in Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature from the University of Southern California, and his doctorate in Slavic Languages and Literatures from the University of California. After teaching Russian for several years at the college level, he founded and served as Director of Medford Education International (MEI), an educational think tank based in Medford, Oregon, which was dedicated to solving specific problems in education. As Director, he was editor of the MEI newsletter, *The Education Connection*, and was responsible for its content. The newsletter reached over 800 colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

Dr. Weiss compiled an advisory board that included educators from Russia, Ukraine, Lichtenstein, and Israel. In addition to numerous community lectures on education, Dr. Weiss sponsored The International Educational Reform Symposium, whose participants included The RAND Corporation, the Northeast Foundation for Children, and educators from Russia, and Ukraine. He also translated articles for The Institute of Pedagogical Innovations in Moscow, and co-edited *New Educational Values 2* with Oleg Gazman and Nata Krylova. His education articles include: *The Individual and the 'E' Theory of Education: Preliminary Notes for a New Science*, *Providing a Helping Hand: An Overview of Medford Education International*, and *Preliminary Steps to a Comprehensive Model of Education*.

Concurrently with his work at MEI, Dr. Weiss worked as an interviewer sponsored by the Southern Oregon Historical Society. As a result of many local interviews, he wrote *Prospect: Portrait of an Upper Rogue Community*, and



Dr. Robert Weiss

Laurelhurst: Lost Community of the Upper Rogue. The Magicians of Form is a culmination of his work as an interviewer and educator as it brought together professors from such diverse fields as architecture, and musical theatre. His poems have been published by *California Quarterly*, *Nomad's Choir*, *Pegasus*, and *The Pen*. Dr. Weiss's honours include receiving a medallion from the Teacher's Training Institute in Kiev for his abridged translation of Vasil Sukhomlinsky's, a famous Ukrainian educator, *I Give my Heart to Children*, and inclusion in the 1999 Marquis edition of *Who's Who in the American West*. He has a special interest in international children's literature with a focus on Russia and Poland. To that end, he translated Nikolai Nosov's story, *The Maker-Uppers*, Janusz Korczak's *King Machush the First [King Matt I]*, and recently completed a play based on the work. Dr. Weiss has also written an original children's story: *The Three Gray Hairs*. His many memberships include: Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, Lewis Carroll



Society of North America, the International Wizard of Oz Society. He is also a life member of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, having performed selections from their works. His hobbies include mineral collecting, exploring waterfalls, and, during the summer, inner tubing on the Rogue River.

He currently moves back and forth between Valley Village, California and Medford, Oregon.

Below we present Robert Weiss's essay as well as fragments of his adaptation of Korczak's book **King Machush the First**. This book is known in English speaking countries as **Matthew the Young King**, **King Matthew I**, **Little King Matty**, and **King Matt the First**. Robert Weiss has used the transliterated version of the main character's name – *Machush*.

King Machush the First and the United States: A Theatrical Approach, or Against Stereotypes

By Robert M. Weiss

King Machush the First is celebrated throughout Poland and Europe as a masterpiece of children's literature. The novel has inspired films, plays, and even an opera¹. However, despite at least three English translations of Janusz Korczak's work, the book has not taken hold in the United States. I believe there are many reasons for this. My play adaptation was composed in part to deal with some of these reasons, and, hopefully, to enable Americans to gain more insight into this children's masterpiece. However, before commenting on the reasons, I would like to focus on some observations scholars have made concerning *King Machush the First*. Then I will offer a brief synopsis of the text itself.

Professor Bogdan Suchodolski, Polish philosopher, historian and educator, wrote that it is precisely in this novel that Korczak's deepest hopes and disillusion find their expression. Lilia

Racheva-Stratieva, children's literature specialist, analyzes some of the social and political satire in her literary article, *Earth Hanging in Infinity: Janusz Korczak's King Matt the First*. The Korczak biographer, Marek Jaworski, views *King Machush the First* as one of the greatest works of children's literature, comparable in its depth of interpretation to *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Gulliver's Travels*. Indeed, throughout the novel Korczak works on many planes simultaneously, employing humour, shock, and reason to convey his innermost thoughts. Jaworski notes that one of the main characteristics of the work is the skillful blending of the fantastic and unreal with a stark psychological realism that forms a multi-textured whole.

King Machush the First begins at a moment of crisis; the King is dying, and, according to law, young Machush must become King. Satire is evident from the first pages, and so is a comical, whimsical tone. But when Machush goes off to learn about war, the novel adopts a brutal, descriptive vein. The change can be unsettling

¹ Opera **King Matt I** by a Russian composer Lev Konov; libretto available in English, look for more info at Wikipedia and <http://lev-konovfono.livejournal.com/>. Musical **Korczak** by Nick Stimson and Chris Williams. – **Editors**

to the reader. When Machush is treated roughly by the soldiers, and learns about the horror and futility of war, few details are spared. And even when Korczak returns to a playful manner, the reader feels the presence of a dark threat that is ready to destroy King Machush's world at any moment. In particular, the conflict between the child's world and the adult's world becomes menacing and cruel. It is precisely that conflict, which results in numerous misunderstandings, that Korczak chooses to exploit. He shows how adult behavior parallels child behavior: The ministers are just as greedy as the children who ask Machush for gifts; the Melancholy King's parliament is just as ineffective and unruly as the children's parliament; Machush's desire to construct a large doll for a girl is paralleled by the ministers' construction of a Machush doll to fool the enemy when Machush disappears in war. The Young King, who is jealous of Machush's success, is shown to be more than a child than Machush. Perhaps, the Young King is a child that has grown up 'the wrong way.' It is he who is the most selfish, and would rather cover up his loss in war time by piling up ammunition rather than helping people as Machush tries to do. Machush learns to think about people less fortunate than himself, which the Young King never does. In the end, it is the cowardice of adults that betrays Machush and destroys his vision.

Now I will attempt to show why *King Machush the First* has not gained wide acceptance by the American public. The lack of knowledge of Polish history is one factor. Towards the late eighteenth century, Poland was seized and divided into three parts by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Poland remained occupied until 1918, when the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empire suffered defeat in World War I. Whatever Polish government was during the occupation period, it was regulated by the interests of the three conquering powers. It is no coincidence that Korczak mentions three foreign kings in his novel. This notion of an intruder taking over is lodged deep

in the Polish conscience, but has no parallel in American culture, except in the Revolutionary Period. To the Poles, the intruder is an individual that could take over and undermine the country at any time, bringing it to chaos. On the other hand, in the U.S. the individual is a sign of hope. There is a feeling that one individual can change the world for the better. This belief was especially true in the 1970s. American and Polish cultures could not be more different. Chaos in government also has a major role in Polish thinking. A government out of control occurs in several of Janusz Korczak's works. In one of Korczak's later novels, *Kaitush the Wizard*, Kaitush's very life is threatened by his own government, ironically, after he has done a great deal of good. But in the U.S., government has been a pinnacle of strength, and something to rely on in difficult times. Polish government, on the other hand, has been perceived as weak and chaotic, reflecting the psychological impact of occupation.

Another reason is Korczak believed in introducing children to the harsh realities of life: poverty, cruelty, injustice. Machush, although a child, is never spared taunting, hunger, pain, abandonment, betrayal. American culture has tried to protect children from such indignities. Indeed, in the 1950s, one couldn't mention the term child abuse in many schools. Even today, certain controversial topics are considered taboo and reasons for a teacher's dismissal. There could not be a greater difference in outlook towards childhood.

Korczak was a firm believer in children's rights. He believed children should have their own court, their own system of government. However, he never idealized children, and emphasized that order comes from discipline and hard work. By contrast, in the 1950s and later, America was one of the few major countries to refuse to sign the United Nations Charter on Children's Rights. Public schools until recently have been largely totalitarian in nature with strong centralization. Student government was limited

Machush: Oh-ho! This is interesting.

Melancholy King: And reforms, they are the most difficult. Yes, the most difficult. (Melancholy King plays a sad melody on his violin.)

You are surprised, because you think that Kings can do whatever they want.

Machush: I don't think that at all. I know that protocol forbids many things, and so does the law.

Melancholy King: Oh, so you know already. Yes, we alone issue bad laws, and then we have to follow them.

Machush: Isn't it possible to issue good laws?

Melancholy King: It is possible, and one should. You are still young, Machush. Learn, and issue good, wise laws. (King takes Machush's hand, and places it on his own, stroking it tenderly.) Listen, Machush. My grandfather gave people freedom, but the outcome was bad. They murdered him, and afterwards the people weren't happy. My father raised a great monument to freedom. It is beautiful, but wars go on. Then there are the poor and unfortunate to consider. I ordered this great parliament building to be built, but what of it? Things are the same as before. (Suddenly, he remembers something.) You know, Machush. We have always done badly when we have given reforms to adults. But if you try with the children, perhaps you will succeed. Now sleep, my dear child. You came here to have fun, and I've disturbed you. Good night."

Machush learns to use his reforms to build summer homes for poor children, and to allow all people to govern. King Arthur comes to realize that what is important is not might is right, but that might should be used for right. On that idea, King Arthur establishes his Knights of the Round Table. Ultimately, both Kings are destroyed by forces outside the kingdom, and within the kingdom. In Arthur's case, the outside threat is his illegitimate son, Mordred, while in Machush's case, it is the reporter for the children's newspaper, who tries to flatter Machush into submission.

In Act 2 Scene 4, the reporter describes the children's newspaper.

Reporter: On the first page we put a drawing of Your Highness sitting on the throne, while hundreds of children kneel at your feet. Below the drawing is a verse, which proclaims you the greatest King since the creation of the world, and the greatest reformer. Your Highness is called heir of the sun, and brother of gods. We put Fellek's photograph on the second page with the article: *The First Child Minister in the World*. Here he is praised for being so wise and brave. As Machush had prevailed over the adult Kings, so Fellek would prevail over the adult ministers. Adults don't know how to govern, because they are old, and their bones hurt them. And so it goes... Ah, yes! Now we come to the most important news: *Fire in the King's Forest*. The largest forest of the Young King is on fire."

In the above clearly patronizing speech, the adult reporter shows no respect for Machush's ability to govern. He talks down to him as if he were only an ignorant child. In the last two lines, he begins to show his true colours. Although, Machush is wise enough not to answer the reporter's subsequent questions about the fire, the damage has been done; the reporter has a foothold in Machush's government. While Guenivere's and Lancelot's indiscretions provide Mordred with the means to destroy King Arthur, it is Machush's "beloved" Fellek, who helps the reporter in bringing about his downfall. Machush's trust in his friend blinds him to Fellek's devious nature, lack of desire to learn and work, greed, and immense ego. In the end, with Fellek's help in forging a manifesto to the children of the world, the reporter gains the assistance of the two other foreign Kings to end Machush's reign.

In Act 3 Scene 7, the seeds for Machush's destruction are sown:

Young King: Greetings, Your Highnesses. I trust you had a safe journey. We invite you to fight this young upstart, and there will be much gold and many jewels for you.



Second King: We see no reason to attack Machush. He has always been our friend.

Melancholy King: I agree with my colleague.

Reporter (*pulls document out of his pocket with forged signatures*): No reason, Your Majesties? I think you'll change your mind after you hear what King Machush has planned. (*Reads document.*) 'Children! I, King Machush the First, turn to you for help in bringing about my reforms. I want children to be able to do what they want without having to obey adults. We are always told that something isn't allowed or isn't proper. This is unjust. Why should adults be allowed to do everything, and we can't? They shout at us. They even beat us. I want children to have the same rights as adults.'

I am King, and know history well. For a long time there were no laws for peasants or workers or women. Now all of them have laws. Children are the only ones who don't. In my country I have given children rights. Children have already

staged a revolution in Queen Kampanella's country. And if Your Royal Highnesses do not agree to give them rights, the children will overthrow you, and select me. I will be King of all the children in the world. I will give children freedom. So help me start a revolution throughout the world.' Signed: King Machush the First, Minister Baron von Rauch (*Folds document, and puts it in his pocket.*)"

The two Kings have no choice, but to engage in a climactic battle with Machush. The play ends, as does 'Camelot', in an inevitable war for reform.

The author would be interested in any feedback or further ideas on the topic. He can be reached at his email address: forestbreeze40@earthlink.net or through his blog at river4827.wordpress.com

"May Dawn Dispel All Fogs"

Joseph H. Albeck, M.D., is a child of two Holocaust survivors who met and were married in the Warsaw ghetto in 1942. They subsequently escaped from the Poniatow 'work' camp before it was liquidated after the Ghetto revolt. His parents were ultimately liberated by the Russians in 1945, and fled to the American zone in Germany, where he was born in 1946. He was the first Jewish child who came into the world in a previously Judenrein area.

He practices at the McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts (USA). Dr. Albeck is also a Clinical Instructor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. His interests include psychopharmacology and the intergenerational trans-



Dr. Joseph H. Albeck

mission of psychological trauma and resilience. Since the 1970s, Dr. Albeck has been a leader of groups for children of Holocaust survivors. He has written commemorative poetry, lyrics



for choral music, as well as textbook chapters and professional articles on Holocaust-related subjects. Dr. Albeck has also been active in professional training endeavors and in the Harvard Trauma Study Group. He has lectured in Europe and North America and is Chairman Emeritus for Intergenerational Aspects of Trauma for the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Dr. Albeck is also a founder of the New England Holocaust Memorial. He was President of TRT, Inc, which,

from 1992 to 2007, sponsored encounters between groups in conflict, including encounters between children of convicted Nazi war criminals and children of Jewish Holocaust survivors; Israelis and Palestinians; Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants, and white and black South Africans.

He is married with three children and five grandchildren.

There Are No Shadows In The Fog

*By Joseph H. Albeck
Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick
September, 2009
Revised: August, 2011
©Joseph Henry Albeck, MD*

*Inspired by **Haiku** of Matsuo Basho (1644-1694)
and the **Ghetto Diary** of Janusz Korczak*

There are no shadows in the fog
A tree-covered mountain
Slowly emerges from the mist,
As gentle rain washes it
Down to the sea below,
Where slivers of a dying sunset
Glow briefly before dissolving
Into the silent waters.
There are no shadows in the fog.
The vista is eerily beautiful
In the twilight stillness
Of a moonless, starless sky,
Like a watercolour dreamscape
Drawn by an oriental master.
There are no shadows in the fog,
But through my uncorrected lenses
I see shadow-visions of
Little orphaned children

Walking to the cattle cars
Waiting to transport them to Treblinka,
In the nightmare fog of a war
Fought not long enough ago,
In places not far enough away
To be forgotten.
In the Warsaw ghetto,
On August 5th, 1942
My mother saw Janusz Korczak,
With her cousin Henik's hand in his,
Leading the 200 citizens
Of the orphan children's republic
Dr. Korczak had so lovingly created,
Singing and marching together,
On the road to the Umslagplatz.
Knowing what was to come,
She watched them pass,
And then fade from view,
Like shadows in the fog.
May dawn dispel all fogs,
And may the sun smile upon
New tales of tears and treasures
Waiting to be told tomorrow
On this road,
With no shadows travelling on it,
Before autumn darkness falls.



Searching Truth in My Heart

By Awna Teixeira

A few years ago I learned of the incredible story involving Janusz Korczak, his staff and children of *Dom Sierot* Orphanage in Warsaw, Poland. It was from a small excerpt from Diane Ackerman's historical fiction novel *The Zoo Keeper's Wife*. I immediately desired to know more about this story, the children and Janusz Korczak. I ordered as many books as I could find and also read the biography of Korczak, a wonderful book *The King of Children* written by Betty Jean Lifton.

It wasn't until then that I began to understand how truly incredible he was. It was what I learned about his work, teachings and what he ended up doing for so many children through the years, that truly inspired me. I was reminded again of the importance of children in our daily lives and on this planet. I have always gained more from my time spent with children than any other one thing and it has been through spending time with them, that I have learned so much about myself and the many things we can easily lose sight of. Even now as I write this, I am taken back to when I was a child singing songs in my head. I was dreamer for sure. I spent many hours in my room making up stories, songs and digging holes in the yard to look for treasures. It wasn't until I was 19 that I began to teach myself instruments, writing and more about singing. Now, after touring internationally with different bands since 2001, I still find myself and my songs highly inspired by those dreams and stories I was making up when I was a kid. I find that the older I get and the longer I am alive the more I gravitate to and search for the truth in my heart, and I feel that is what those dreams and stories are.

In September of 2012 I released my debut solo album *Where The Darkness Goes*. It was a big



Awna Teixeira is a Portuguese-Canadian singer and songwriter based in Utah (USA). For almost 9 years Awna lived in Victoria and Vancouver and played with Canadian folk music band 'Po'Gir'l

step for me, as I have been working alongside other musicians for 12 years. It is a new chapter of looking within and learning what is true to me and my music. I do think one can experience this many times in life, and even though it can be scary, I always seem to welcome it with open arms. It feels like a new book, a fresh piece of paper, or a new sunrise. I write and compose mostly on accordion, banjo, guitar and ukulele. All the songs on the album are greatly inspired by trying learn more about ourselves. Trying to get back to the most honest important parts of me, I have been through many struggles over the years, and have sometimes found that it's in our darkest times, when we can find our truest light.

One of the songs off my new album is called *The Little Review*, named after the children's newspaper Korczak ran in Warsaw, which was the first and only newspaper written and edited

by children. The song is inspired by Korczak, his staff and children; by their strength, dignity, and what they endured. With all that they were going through, they were able to accomplish so much and affect so many lives positively. Inspired also by being reminded, that no matter what is going on around you, it is what's inside your heart that matters most. What your own voice is telling you. I believe this is something Janusz Korczak felt was really important, children's voices. As he once wrote, "You are mistaken if you think we have to lower ourselves to communicate with children. On the contrary, we have to reach up to their feelings, stretch, stand on our tiptoes." I would love to share this song with everyone. I have posted *The Little Review* on my website for free download. Please pass it along.

Thank you to all who keep Janusz Korczak's views and teachings alive. All the best to you and your loved ones.

Awna Teixeira can be reached at hazytales@gmail.com, www.hazytales.me

P.S. by Galina Sanaena

May 27th 2013 at the Fairview Pub in Vancouver proved to be an amazing night: Awna Teixeira showed up in the city. With Julia Chandler on percussion, Awna performed songs mostly from the album *Where The Darkness Goes*. She played on accordion, ukulele, guitar and banjo. This mixture of folk music with guitar ballads and gentle vocals brought out a few people to dance. Along with the memorable concert moment when Awna shared the story of her family, the heart-touching surprise was the performing *The Little Review* song with brief introduction about Janusz Korczak and our Association. Awna's music created truly unique intimate atmosphere that's ideally suited to rainy Vancouver's night. And yes, for this moment darkness went away. Thank you, Awna!

P.P.S.

After the concert, on behalf of our Association, I passed to Awna the book *May Their Lot Be Lighter...* by Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo and the folder with the 2012 Korczak Conference materials as a sign of our appreciation. Soon after, I received a warm e-mail from Awna. She mentioned that now, during her concerts, she keeps Olga's book together with English translation of *The Child's Right to Respect* on her CD-table, "so people can have a look through it when I speak about Korczak from stage".

THE LITTLE REVIEW

AWNA TEIXEIRA

INTRO

VERSE

ONE BY ONE THEY ALL FILE IN-TO THE STREETS

TAKE YOUR HAND AND YOU SHOW THEM THE WAY

INSTRUMENTAL BREAK

REPEAT 4 TIMES



21 VERSE

25

29 CHORUS

33

37 INSTRUMENTAL BREAK

41

45 CODA

OS AL CODA

CHORUS

PRE - CIUS WON - DESS TAKE YOU A -

WAY. WAY.

PRE - CIUS WON - DESS

Chord diagrams: D, Dmaj7, Em, A, G.



50

54

58 OUTRO

62

66

TAKE YOU A - WA - Y FOL - LOW YOUR HEART LET THEM

TAKE YOU A - WAY.

DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO

Chord diagrams: Em, D, A, G, Dmaj7.



Photo by G. Sanaeva

The Little Review

By Awna Teixeira

One by one they all file into the street
 Take your hand and you show them the way
 Dressed up fine in their summer best
 Packed up little dreams for the road for the road

Rivers running the sun is high above
 Running free on the forest floor
 One by one meadows fill with flowers
 Running free and you show them the way

Leave behind all these crumbling walls
 Leave behind all the sadness and sorrow
 beaming hearts singing all through the streets
 One by one little kings and little queens

Chorus

Precious wonders take you away
 Follow your heart let them take you away

Imagine blue skies know no clouds
 Imagine sunlight in the heart of everyone
 Imagine stories your future can hold
 Packed up little dreams for the road for the road

One by one they all hold their heads high
 Take your hand and you show them the way
 Smiling wide as they walk through the streets
 One by one little kings and little queens

Chorus

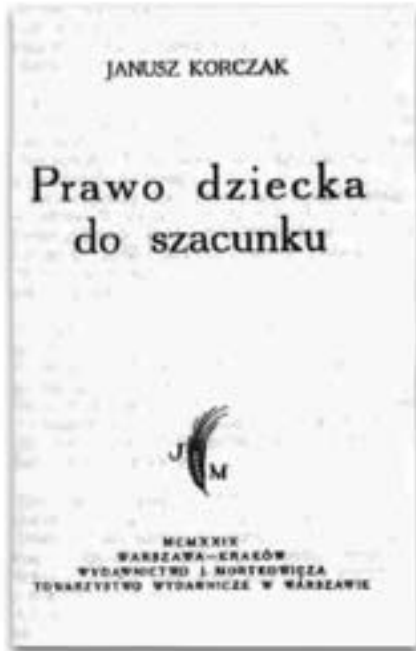
Precious wonders take you away
 follow your heart let them take you away



Janusz Korczak. The Child's Right to Respect (1928)

Fragments

Translated by Jerzy Bachrach



The Child's Right to Respect.

The first edition. 1929

Disdain — Distrust

From earliest infancy the mind is trained to regard size as value.

"I'm big now," a child put on the table exclaims joyfully. "I'm bigger than you are," another proudly announces, comparing his size with that of a peer.

It is annoying to have to stand on tiptoe and still be unable to reach. It is hard to keep up with the grownups when one's steps are small. A glass will easily slip out of a little hand. Awkwardly, with difficulty, a child climbs on a chair, into a vehicle, up the stairs.

He can't reach the door knob, look out of the window, take down or hang up anything because it is too high. In a crowd, he can't see anything, he gets in the way and is buf-

feted. It is uncomfortable and annoying to be small.

Respect and admiration goes to what is big, what takes up more room. Small stands for common and uninteresting. Little people — little wants, little joys, little sorrows. Impressive — a big city, high mountains, a tall tree. We say: "A great deed, a great man." A small child is light, there is less of him. We must bend down, reach down to him.

[...]

Politicians and lawgivers make tentative efforts, and time and again they blunder. They deliberate and decide on the child, too. But who asks the child for his opinion and consent? What can a child possibly have to say?

[...]

We do not treat a child seriously because he has a long life ahead.

We are conscious of the effort of our own steps, the burden of self-interest, the limitations of perceptions and sensations. A child runs and jumps, sees without desiring, is puzzled, asks questions. Lightly he sheds tears and generously he enjoys himself.

[...]

A child is not a soldier, he does not defend his homeland, though he suffers together with it. Why trouble to make him think well of you when he has no vote, does not threaten, demand, argue. Weak, small, poor, dependent — a citizen in embryo.

Indulgence, roughness, brutality – and always disdain.
A brat, a kid. A man in the future, but not today.
Will be.

[...]

The child does not know how much and what he should eat, how much and when to drink. He does not know what will overtake. So supervise his diet, his sleep, his rest. For how long? As of when? Always. Distrust changes with age, but does not diminish, even tends to increase. He cannot distinguish the important from the unimportant. Order and systematic work are alien to him. Absent-minded, he will forget, ignore, neglect. He does not know about future responsibilities. We must instruct, guide, break in, slow down, suppress, straighten out, warn, prevent, impose and combat.

Resentment

Nothing really matters. We love children in spite of everything, they are our delight, consolation and hope, our joy and relaxation, our sunshine. We do not terrify, burden, harry, and they feel free and happy... Why, all the same, that sense of a heavy load an obstruction, an awkward appendage? From where the feeling of resentment toward the beloved child? Even before he greeted the inhospitable world confusion and limitations crept into the domestic scene. Into the past, irrevocably, recede the brief months of long-awaited, sanctioned joy.

[...]

The Right to Respect

There are as it were two lives, one serious, respectable, the other indulgently tolerated, of less value. We say: Man of the future, worker of the future, citizen of the future. Such they

will be, there will be a beginning, seriously, but in the future. We kindly permit them to stick around but we find it more to our taste when they are not at hand.

No, they were and they will be. They have not caught us on the run and briefly. Children are not a casual encounter to be hurriedly passed by with a smile and a light word of greeting. Children account for a considerable portion of mankind, of the population, of nationals, residents, citizens, and constant companions. They were, they will be and they are. Is there such a thing as a make-believe existence? No. Childhood means long and important years of a man's life.

[...]

Respect for the present moment, for today. How will he manage tomorrow, if we do not allow him a conscious, responsible life today. Not to trample upon, humiliate, handle as a mere slave to tomorrow, not to repress, hurry, drive on. Respect for every single instant, for it passes never to return, and always take it seriously; hurt, it will bleed, slain, it will haunt with harsh memories. Let him eagerly drink in the joy of the morning and look ahead with confidence. That is just how the child wants it to be. A fable, a chat with the dog, catching a ball, an intense study of a picture, the copying of a single letter — nothing is for a child a waste of time. Everything kindly. Right is on the side of the child.

[...]

The Child's Right to Be Himself

How will he turn out when he's grown up? — we ask anxiously. We desire our children to improve on ourselves. We dream of a perfect man of the future.



We must swiftly denounce our own lie, pin down selfishness decked out in lofty phrases. Apparent self-denial is, in fact, a common swindle.

We have come to terms with ourselves, been reconciled, forgiven ourselves and set aside the duty to improve. We were badly brought up. Too late now. The defects and bad habits have too strong a hold. We neither let the children criticize us nor do we watch our own behavior. Absolved, we have capitulated, shifting the burden of all that onto the children. A teacher eagerly adopts the adult prerogative. To watch the children, not himself, to register the children's faults, not his own.

[...]

What is the role of our educators, what is their work?

They are supervisors of walls and furniture, of quiet in the playground, of clean ears and floors. They are cowhands watching that the cattle do no harm, that they do not disturb adults at their occupations and pleasures. They act as custodians of worn-out pants and boots and as stingy dispensers of cereal. They are guardians of adult privilege and careless executors of their inexpert caprices.

[...]

And the adult mess, the backwater of outlooks and convictions, the herd psychology, the prejudices and habits, the frivolity of fathers and mothers, the whole shooting match of irresponsible adult life. Negligence, slothfulness, dull obstinacy, thoughtlessness, adult absurdities, follies and drinking bouts.

And the seriousness, sensibility and self-composure of children, their dependable undertakings, experience within their own sphere, a capital of equitable judgments and appraisals, tactful reticence in demands, subtle feelings, infallible sense of right.

Does everybody win when playing chess with a child?

Let us demand respect for the clear eyes, mooth foreheads, youthful effort and confidence. Why should dulled eyes, a furrowed brow, untidy ray hair, or bent resignation command greater respect?

There is sun in the east and in the west. There is morning and evening prayer alike.

Every inhalation has its exhalation and every systole its diastole.

A soldier when he goes out to fight, and when he returns battle stained.

A new generation is growing up, a new wave is gathering. They appear with their vices and virtues. Give them conditions for better development. We shall not win a suit against a casket containing diseased heredity; we cannot tell a cornflower to be grain.

We are no performers of miracles — we do not want to be quacks. We renounce the deceptive longing for perfect children.

We demand: Do away with hunger, cold, amnesia, stench, overcrowding, overpopulation. It is you who beget the sick and the crippled, you who create the conditions for rebellion and contagion. Yours is the levity, the frivolousness, the insensibility, and the disorder.

Listen. Contemporary life is shaped by a powerful brute, homo rapax. He dictates the mode of living. His concessions to the weak are a lie, his respect for the aged, for the emancipation of women, for kindness to children — falsehoods. Aimlessly wanders the homeless sentiment — a Cinderella. And it is precisely the children who are the princes of feeling, the poets and thinkers.

Respect, if not humility, before the white, translucent, immaculate, holy childhood.

Source: *Selected Works of Janusz Korczak*. Warsaw, 1967.



Lillian Boraks-Nemetz is a Holocaust Child Survivor and an author of poetry and prose. Among her books are award winning, *The Old Brown Suitcase* and *The Tapestry of Hope*, an anthology she co-edited with a colleague. She has an MA in Comparative Literature and teaches Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia's Writing Center. Her work and interest in the Association has its roots in her childhood when she was incarcerated in the Warsaw Ghetto as was Korczak and his orphans. Lillian's father was an avid admirer of Korczak, and described him to her as a man whose dedication to children and struggle for

I learnt about Korczak's ideas from my father when I was a little child. He was a storyteller and every night he tucked me in to my bed and told me a good-night story. Very often he told me about the Old Doctor who lived with many orphans in a big house that was run by the kids. It was a happy place where the children made all the rules – a children's republic with its own court and parliament.

Later in my life, Janusz Korczak's name was introduced to me as an author of very popular children's books. The story *King Matt the First* was prominently displayed on a bookshelf in my room. And then I read the history of the Warsaw Ghetto and the last days of Janusz Korczak and his orphans.

In Vancouver I was introduced to Longina and Alexander Dimant by the Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Krzysztof Kasprzyk, during

Gina Dimant was born in Warsaw, Poland. She was 13 when the Second World War broke out. Her parents, together with their daughters (Gina had a little sister), managed to cross the border into the Soviet Union before the Nazis started persecuting Jews; in other words, before it was too late. The family found shelter in Byelorussia. Very soon, however, they were deported by the Soviets to a remote area of Eastern Kazakhstan – widely known as "Siberia" for its severe climate and harsh living conditions. In spite of the difficulties they faced, they were able to start a new life there. Gina and her parents spent more than 6 years in that place – from 1939 to 1946. In 1946, they returned to Poland, to find only

their rights was boundless. When in the ghetto, Lillian's father took her to visit the Korczak orphanage. Lillian grew up with the knowledge that Janusz Korczak was a hero. She mentions him in her novels and poetry and is currently a dedicated Board member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. ■



Lillian Boraks-Nemetz

preparations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It was at their kitchen table that the idea of our participation in the Janusz Korczak Movement was conceived. Since the Association's establishment I have been its Board member.



Malgorzata Burczycka

Born in Warsaw, I was educated as an art historian and worked for a while at Royal Castle in Warsaw. After immigrating to Canada, I went back to school and became a social worker. I work with women and children that are victims of abuse. ■

ashes. But Gina, who was married by that time, was young and strong, and ready to start a new life again. In 1968, however, due to the infamous anti-Semitic campaign that took place in Poland, she and her husband Alexander Dimant had to pack their humble luggage yet again. That same year, the Dimants arrived in Canada. A new start – one more time. They did not



Gina Dimant



know English, they did not have jobs. But they were determined to make Vancouver their own place on earth, their asylum. They built a house and made it a home. It is always open to new immigrants and old settlers, to Holocaust survivors and those who were born after the war, to religious people and agnostics, to Christians and Jews... The circle of people that the Dimants created friendships with grew bigger. It was as if they were trying to find a new extended family, like the one they had lost during the war. That was their affirmation of life, in spite of the death that had narrowly missed them during the war. They never forgot those who did not survive. They believed it was their duty as the survivors to remember the others – the dead and irreplaceable. They belonged to a small group of Vancouverites who would constantly repeat the name of Janusz Korczak, trying to keep his memory alive. First, they had the idea

to name a kindergarten after Korczak; then, to organize an evening devoted to him at the Jewish Community Centre. But Vancouver was not yet ready to accept it... When the opportunity came, Gina (her beloved husband Alexander died in 1998) enthusiastically embraced it. She was one of the founders of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and a long standing member of its Board. She put all her heart into making the Association's goals become reality. And as usual, her home is still open to anyone who knew – or simply wants to know – who Janusz Korczak was.

In May 2012, the Government of the Republic of Poland awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland to Mrs. Longina Dimant, for her contribution to the development of good relationships between the Polish and Jewish peoples. ■



Iwona Haskins

early childhood, with his children's books (including *King Matt the First*), and stories of Korczak's hero-

Iwona Haskins was born in Poland and grew up in Warsaw. Upon finishing high school, she pursued a Master's degree in Sociology at the University of Warsaw. Her introduction to Korczak's work began in

ism, which were told by her family members. During high school and university, Iwona volunteered for the Janusz Korczak Orphanage to help children with learning disabilities.

Iwona was introduced to the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada through close friends and social connections and is now a Board member responsible for contact with the Polish community media. Iwona works for Coast Foundation Society and provides psycho-social rehabilitation for people with mental illness. ■



Yakov Medvedev

had the privilege of studying in a French immersion program. I was also fortunate enough to see the world

I am a graduate of St. George's High School in Vancouver and will be continuing my studies at the University of British Columbia this fall. I was born in Moscow, Russia, and came to Canada at the age of two. In elementary school I

through various trips and travels. Over time, I fostered an appreciation for the diversity of the world, as I had the chance to see things from the perspective of different cultures. What I learned was that despite the diversity of the world, there are issues that transcend all boundaries; among these, is the negligence of child rights. I became interested in helping spread awareness about the importance of child's rights, and this led me to discovering the Janusz Korczak Association. I am a member of the Editorial Board for the annual Newsletter. I hope that the work of today will lead to a brighter tomorrow. ■



Dr. Olga Medvedeva-Nathoo studied Polish Language and Literature at the Moscow State University and completed her doctorate in the history of Polish literature at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Slavonic Studies, where she subsequently worked as a senior researcher. Olga is an author of numerous articles on Polish literature, culture, history, and Polish-Russian relations as well as translations of Polish books into Russian. These were published in Russia, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, etc.

Olga has developed scholarly interest in children's psychology. In this very context, she has devoted herself to researching the work of Janusz Korczak as an educator and writer, participating in numerous international conferences (Russia, Poland, Israel, Austria, France, Holland, Switzerland, USA among others). At the start of the 1990's, Olga founded the Janusz Korczak Association in Russia (being its first head), a concept she took with her to Canada where she presently lives and where together with friends, she established the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada.

For her contribution to the Korczak Movement she was awarded with a medal by the Society Janusz Korczak House in Jerusalem in 2005 and a Diploma by the Janusz Korczak Association of Russia in 2012.

*Jerry was born in post WWII Poland. The name of Janusz Korczak was well recognized there and his children's books, such as *Kajtek the Wizard* and *King Matt the First*, were an important part of every child's reading. In his youth Jerry encountered two of Korczak's close associates, *Bolek Drukier* and *Misza Waserman*, and his awareness of the legacy of Janusz Korczak started to develop. Becoming a father of two boys, and now a grandfather, has brought home the importance of this cause.*

Jerry was one of the founders of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and became its first chair-

For the past several years, Olga, being an independent scholar, has devoted herself to the subject of "Retracing Korczak's Footsteps in Canada." She has managed to find and conduct interviews with people who were tied to Korczak before WWII:

*his pupils, correspondents with *The Little Review* weekly, and families of the sponsors of the Home for Orphans. It is in this framework that she wrote a book *May Their Lot Be Lighter... Of Korczak and His Pupil* and is now completing a biography of *Isaac Eliasberg (1860 – 1929)*, a close friend of Janusz Korczak and long-standing chairman of the Warsaw Help the Orphans Association.*

As a Board member of the Association and as an Editor in Chief of the Newsletter, Olga is responsible for the Association's research and publications.

Being asked what Korczak means to her, she said: "Korczak is one of the key-figures who helped shape my identity as a human being, a mother, an educator, and a scholar. Without him I would not be who I am today." ■



Olga Medvedeva -Nathoo

*man in 2006. Over the years of his involvement with the Association, Jerry has interacted with some of the Canadian residents most closely associated with Korczak, including his pupil *Leon Gluzman* and correspondents of *Maly Przeglad (The Little Review)*: *Richard Mirabel* and *Dr. Ludwik Mirabel*. Today he cooperates with many Korczakians around*



Jerry Nussbaum



the world, in Poland, Sweden, the United States and Israel, increasing awareness of Korczak's work.

In his personal encounters with two of Korczak's former pupils Itzhak Belfer and Shlomo Nadel, Jerry has had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the profound impact of Korczak's practice. Both are artists; Shlomo is a photographer and Itzhak

is a sculptor and a painter, and their professional work is deeply influenced by their mentor and father figure. The many hours of discussion with them revealed to Jerry the uniqueness of Korczak's accomplishments. Jerry is humbled to be able to contribute in a modest way to the promotion of Korczak's ideas.



Galina Sanaeva

MA in Polish Language and Literature with specialization in Education, I taught children in grades 6-12 for a little while. I enjoyed acquiring experience in the field of education. However, I chose an academic career and successfully completed my PhD studies at

I was born in Kaliningrad, the Russian exclave that shares borders with Poland and Lithuania. My curiosity about the culture of the neighbouring region led me to choose Polish studies as my major at the University. After receiving my

A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow). My experience as a researcher includes writing articles and papers, as well as translating books. The former have been published in Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and Canada.

I was familiar with Korczak's legacy since it was a part of my University curriculum. Later on, I encountered fellow Korczakians in Vancouver, where I am living now. As a Board member of the Janusz-Korczak Association of Canada I am responsible for the following: co-editing the Association's Newsletter, updating our website, and for supervision of membership administration.



Andrzej Jan Wroblewski

of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. Former Visiting Professor at the Emily Carr School of Art and Design, and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.

Artist, designer, educator. Professor Emeritus, founding Dean of the Industrial Design Department and former Chancellor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland. Professor Emeritus and former Head of the Industrial Design Program at the University

His creative work includes sculpture, tapestry, industrial design, digital art, graphic design, and photography. He has written widely on cultural aspects of design, semantics of form, and design pedagogy. His most recent book, The Art of Seeing, was published in 2013 by the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw Academic Press. His works are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, National Museum in Warsaw, Museum of Modern Art in Lodz and Beckmann Institute at Urbana-Champaign. Prof. A. Wroblewski has been a member of the Board of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada since 2008.