

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
JANUSZ KORCZAK
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



Our goals

The objectives of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada are as follows:

- * To foster the recognition of Janusz Korczak's life and work
- * To familiarize Canadians with his heroism during World War II, and his staunch defense of children's rights.
- * To disseminate Korczak's pedagogical ideas as well as their effect on children's education.

Our Tasks

Projects developed in 2003

- * A travelling exhibition *Janusz Korczak and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto*, produced by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre with assistance from the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, has been on display in London (UK) and in the following cities of Canadian Province Ontario: December 10-11, 2003, in association with International Human Rights Day, a preview for the media and the public was held at the Metro hall in Toronto. In two days, 3,000 people toured the exhibit.

January 19-27, 2004,

Kitchner City Hall Rotunda, Kitchner.

February 9-12

Thunder Bay at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay.

February 16-19

Am Shalom Synagogue, Barrie.

February 23-27

Peterborough at Trent Univeristy, Peterborough.

March 22-26

B'nei Israel Synagogue, St. Catharines.

Media coverage of the exhibition in Ontario:

1. Julio Gomes: "Sharing painful memoirs has to be done: Holocaust Survival tells his story. Educational display lands at Lakehead University"
The Chronicle Journal, January 2004.
2. Rob O'Flanagan: "Exhibit explores life of "Just Man": Life of early children's advocate displayed at Tom Davis Square"
The Sudbury Star, February 16, 2004.
3. Saira Peesker: "Holocaust hero's legacy honoured at Trent"
The Peterborough Examiner, February 24, 2004.
4. Cynthia Gasner: "Korczak exhibit to tour Ontario communities"
The Canadian Jewish News, January 8, 2004.
5. "Warsaw Ghetto exhibit on display at synagogue"
Metroland Papers, February 13, 2004.

6. Michele Henry: "Photo exhibit brings horrors of the Holocaust to life: Work of Physician on display at Barrie synagogue"
Barrie Examiner, February 17, 2004.

7. Christian Cotroneo: "Exhibit honours Holocaust heroism"
Toronto Star, December 12, 2003.

- * A lecture and discussion of Korczak's pedagogy were held at the Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture. The lecture was delivered by Olga Medvedeva
- * Several programs about Korczak's life and legacy, featuring Olga Medvedeva, were broadcast on Co-op Radio and the Multicultural Broadcast Station
- * Awarding of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada to winners of the Vancouver Competition, "Mastering the Polish Language".

Projects to be developed in 2004

- * Lectures on Korczak followed by discussions
- * Promotion of Korczak's legacy in the Canadian media
- * Replenishment of libraries with books by and about Korczak

Request for Information

A member of our Association, Olga Medvedeva, is currently collecting materials on the Eliasberg family. Izaak Eliasberg was the President of the charity organization *Help the Orphans* and founder of Janusz Korczak's orphanage in Warsaw. After the Second World War his wife Stella Eliasberg and his daughter Marta Eliasberg-Heyman lived in Vancouver. Any documents, memoirs and notes concerning the lives of the Eliasbergs in prewar Warsaw or after the war would be appreciated.

Please contact Olga at 604-681-5633 or e-mail: khadim@sitara.com

Membership fee

The membership fee of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada is \$10 per year, payable in cheque-form. Please mail to:

Mrs. Gina Dimant

#203 - 5455 West Boulevard

Vancouver, BC V6M 3W5 Canada

New members are very welcome!

Our contacts

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Design: Antoinette Jackson, www.antoINETTE.ca

A MONUMENT TO JANUSZ KORCZAK

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, we appeal to members of all sister organizations and everyone else who sees the importance of understanding children, for your support in the construction of a monument honoring Janusz Korczak.

Janusz Korczak (1878-1942) was a pediatrician, an educator, a writer, and a known personality in pre-war Poland. His greatest achievements in the field of education were the orphanage Nasz Dom for Christian children and the orphanage Dom Sierot for children of the Jewish poor. During the Nazi occupation, Korczak together with his associates and the children was confined to the Warsaw Ghetto. Korczak was constantly appealed to by his friends to flee from the ghetto. He could have survived by going into a hiding place himself, but he would not leave his children. In 1942 Janusz Korczak, along with 200 of his children, perished in the Nazi extermination camp of Treblinka.

The idea of the monument's erection was initiated by the Janusz Korczak Association of Poland in collaboration with the American-Polish-Israeli Foundation "Shalom", other organizations, and the authorities of the City of Warsaw. The Monument will be situated in the western part of the square located on the north side of the Palace of Culture and Science, between the extension of Sliska Street, and Swietokrzyska Street; in downtown Warsaw, where the orphanage run by Janusz Korczak once stood.

The honorary committee for the building of the monument was created by leading representatives of the arts, sciences and politics, as well as by Janusz Korczak followers - people whose work is based on Dr. Korczak's philosophy of education. The laying of the foundation took place on September 19, 2003.

Now the future of this noble project is in hands of contributors from Poland and from interested parties all over the world. Many individuals have already supported the initiative to build the monument and we beseech you to add your support!

Let us express our great respect for the life and work of the Old Doctor by paving the way for his symbolic presence in the heart of his city.

The Editors of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada Newsletter

Those interested can participate in this project by making a donation or purchasing a brick (each of which will be laid into the base of the monument, bearing the name of the donor) available from the Shalom Foundation.

Bank account number:

Deutsche Bank 24 "DAR SERCA" 19101123-22002941-27015-110400003

For donations within Canada please contact Gina Dimant at 604-733-6386.

For more information on this project visit <http://www.shalom.org.pl>

Thank you

We greatly appreciate donations for the Janusz Korczak monument in Warsaw:

M. E. Bleszynska, S. Bluman, L. Boraks-Nemetz, M. Burczycka, A. & W. Busza, M. Chrzastowska, K. Czapla, G. Dimant, The Dabrowski family, M. Glass, P. & E. Heller, S. Heller, L. Komar, O. Medvedeva, J. Nussbaum, G.S. Steimerz, K. Szafnicki, L. Wejgsman, I. Weksler

From a letter written by Professor Jadwiga Binczycka (Warsaw, Poland) to the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada

"... Bricks (18x7 cm) which will be laid at the monument will bear the names of individual donors. Those that are purchased by organizations will be of a bigger size (35x21 cm). These bricks will be used to create a mosaic of support around the monument. I believe the day will come I will walk on this mosaic. The sooner - the better! I dream that a day will come when a children's park will be arranged around the monument - a kind of Hyde Park for kids. They will have an opportunity to speak out there, to talk about their rights and their troubles. I dream about Korczak's figure having a pocket in his gown, where children will put their letters to the Old Doctor and to us, adults. Korczak wrote: "...Have dreams - one day something will come out from them..."

For those who are interested in Mikhail Chemiakin's project, "Memorial to the Righteous of the World", amongst them Korczak:

http://www.chemiakinbooks.com/HTMLFIL/ES/NEWS_htmlfiles/righteous.html

A monument to Janusz Korczak will stand in the city core of Warsaw

By Marta Burczycka

Articles on the event have appeared in many Polish newspapers, while national television stations provided in-depth coverage of the same.

In the plaza of Warsaw's Palace of Culture and Science an inaugural stone has been laid, in advance of the raising of a monument to Janusz Korczak. On the 19th of September, 2003 representatives of Korczak organizations, city officials and children from schools and orphanages that take the Old Doctor as their patron and model were gathered here. In this spot, on Sliska Street, once stood the home for orphans run by Janusz Korczak. It is from here that the Old Doctor and the children under his care left for their final journey to Treblinka.

The ceremonial laying of the dedicatory stone was attended by: the president of the city of Warsaw Lech Kaczynski, vice president of the city of Warsaw Andrzej Urbanski, the president of the Janusz

Korczak Association in Poland Jadwiga Binczycka, the general director of the Shalom Foundation Golda Tencer, ambassador of the State of Israel to Poland Shewach Weiss. Each in their remarks underscored Janusz Korczak's role in advancing universal human rights, his attitude towards life and his love of children.

The project of creating the monument to Janusz Korczak originated in 2000 from the initiative of Jadwiga Binczycka and Golda Tencer. The project's honorary chairperson is Jolanta Kwasniewska, wife of the President of the Republic of Poland.

An international contest was held to choose a design for the monument. The adjudicators of the contest included: professor Adam Myjek, chancellor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw; professor Marek Budzynski, architect; and Szymon Szurmiej, director of the Jewish Theatre in Warsaw. Marek Web from YIVO (New York) and Lena Benonait, an Israeli architect, also contributed advice. The 30 designs entered in the competition were on display in the Jewish Theatre in July of 2002. The judging took place on the 30th of October 2002.

The winning project by Zbigniew Wilma and Bogdan Chmielewski depicts Korczak and his children near a tree with two trunks, symbolizing the shared losses of Poles and Jews.

(See our cover.)

Marta Burczycka, a member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, and Master's student at Carleton University in Ottawa.



Plays about Korczak

Several plays about Korczak have been written in various countries and staged in different languages.

We mention a few of them below:

"Korczak und die Kinder" ("Korczak and Children") by Erwin Sylwanus; Hamburg 1957.

"Le Dernier Pourimspiel des Orphelins du Docteur Janusz Korczak" ("The Last Pourimspiel of Dr. Janusz Korczak's Orphans") by Emmanuel Eydoux; Marseille 1967.

"Kim byl ten czlowiek? Rzecz o Januszu Korczaku" ("Who Was this Man?") by Tamara Karren; London 1981.

"Dr. Yanush Korczak" by Alina Kentof, based on "A Field of Buttercup" by Joseph Hyams; Florida, USA 2001.

"Korczaks Koffer" ("Korczak's Suitcase") by Sigfried Steiger; Günzburg 1999

"Dr Korczak's Example" by David Greig; Edinburgh 2003.

"Korczak's Children" by Jeffrey Hatcher. Staged at Minnesota Children's Theatre Company, 2003.

"Korczak and the Children" by G. E. Farrel. For the complete text of the play visit http://www.janusz-korczak.de/korczak_and_the_children.html.

Every two years since 1994, Warsaw hosts The International Festival of Children and Youth Theatre honouring Korczak as part of The International Association of Children and Youth Theaters (ASSITEJ) activities.

In 2003 the play *"Korczak's Suitcase"* was performed by the "Experimental Theatre" from Günzburg/Germany (staged by Siegfried Steiger) in Alexander von Humboldt Schule in Montreal, the only German School in Canada.

Children of Night

by Gabriel Emanuel; Toronto 1985



The play premiered in 1978 in Toronto at the Bathurst Street Theatre with 12 children in the cast (it starred Vancouver's John Juliani) and was repeated the following year in Winnipeg at the Manitoba Theatre Centre starring Paul Kligman. It has also had staged readings at theatre festivals in New York (with Len Cariou playing Korczak) and in Israel.

From the Author's Foreword

...*Children of Night* is a drama which is set in the Warsaw Ghetto. It is a play about the little heroes, the most defenseless victims of all... *Children of Night* is also about Janusz Korczak...

Cast of Characters

DR JANUSZ KORCZAK - Director of the Sienna Street Children's Home of the Warsaw Ghetto

ADAM CZERNIKOW (*Czerniakow) - Head of the Judenrat (Jewish Community Council, of the Warsaw Ghetto)

MOTL - a child of the streets of the ghetto

MRS. FLEISCHMAN - a resident of the ghetto

MARUK KESSLER - a teacher and resident of the ghetto

NAZI OFFICER - in charge of the ghetto

THE CORE: Five actors; three women, two men. (Two of the Core group may be actors playing the roles of Mrs. Fleischman and Maruk Kessler.) The Core form part of the audience for the Second Act play-within-a-play.

THE CHILDREN: Boys - Pinya, David, Mendel, Bointsche, Herschl, Laible
Girls - Rivka, Fruma, Stepha, Lisa, Gettel.

JANUSZ KORCZAK IN CANADA

Children of Night

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The passage that follows shows Korczak's relationships with children. Motl, an innocent child wants to go on the train with zeyda, his grandfather. He does not understand that his zeyda has been deported to a death camp.

KORCZAK [TO CHILDREN]: ...At ease, soldiers. Why don't you all march out of here and play in the other room for a while [...]

(Children exit somberly, except for MOTL who hides himself in a closet as KORCZAK turns to close the door.) [...]

KORCZAK: ... (goes over to his desk and begins to record an entry in his diary (writing) "March 2....New boy - Motl. Parents unknown. Referred by a Mrs. Fleischman. Indications of severe withdrawal, malnutrition and incipient hysteria. Incident with Kommandant - interference with cultural activities. Fifty spectators only. Nine P. M. curfew.

No more potatoes.

Very distressed...children learning to hate.

GITTEL: "You don't make sense to me any more."

(He pauses, stops writing)

Good day sir. (laughs) Good day sir. Good day sir. When the child laughs the tyrant trembles.

(He replaces diary in desk drawer. He reaches for writer's journal on top of shelf and resumes writing)

KORCZAK: "The child had discovered the ultimate weapon - laughter. It hung like a

demonic presence in the room. The child laughed and blew the boots off the Kommandant's feet. He laughed again and blew the proud stiff uniform off the oppressor's back. He laughed again and again and left the tyrant naked...a pitiful figure made of glass that shattered into a thousand pieces.

And then it was over. The doctor stooped to pick up a piece of the broken glass. It was shaped like a heart. He held it to the sky and through the prism...revealed...was a rainbow. And chained to the rainbow was the figure of a man. A man... or a messenger? " 'Moses? Moses, is that you,' the doctor cried? 'Why are you dressed in chains? Who in Heaven is holding your back? Come back, Moses... Moses, come back. ...On your own if you must...Moses...'"

(A banging sound is heard from the closet)

MOTL: I want to play Moses!

(KORCZAK stops writing and runs over to the closet. He opens the door)

KORCZAK: Motl! What are you doing here? How long have you been in there?

MOTL: (bursts into tears) I...just... wanted...to be Moses.

KORCZAK: (embracing the boy) There, there, Motl, my little Moses. You don't have to cry.

MOTL: I'm scared!

KORCZAK: No! Moses scared? Motl, you must be brave if you want to be like Moses. Didn't your grandfather tell you how Moses stood up to the cruel Pharaoh and was not afraid to look him straight in the eye and say...well, you know what he said.

MOTL: Let my people go.

KORCZAK: That's right.

MOTL: My zayda [*grandfather] knew Moses!

KORCZAK: Really?

MOTL: He was a rabbi.

KORCZAK: Yes, I know. What was his name?

MOTL: Zayda.

KORCZAK: I mean what was his full name? Where did he come from? Where did you come from?

MOTL: (upset) I can't tell! I can't tell anybody! I made zayda a promise. My name is Motl, that's all.

KORCZAK: Do you know where zayda is, Motl?

MOTL: He had to go away, I saw him go, on a big train...with lots of people. But he's coming back for me soon. He knows where I am. Zayda watches me all the time.

KORCZAK: Of course he does. You have wonderful zayda, Motl. And you are a wonderful boy. You will make zayda proud.

MOTL: But I can't stay here when zayda comes back. I'll have to go home with him...on the train.

KORCZAK: No, not on the train.

MOTL: Yes, on the train, with zayda. He said he's coming back. So we can go on the train together.

KORCZAK: Motl, forget about the train. Don't think about it.

MOTL: Why?

Children of the Night

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KORCZAK: You will never go on the train.

MOTL: My zayda told me that I shouldn't be afraid of it. He said that he will be with me when I go on the train. He will be with me all the time.

KORCZAK: Motl, I am with you. You don't have to go on the train.

MOTL: I'm not afraid of the train. Zayda knows. Zayda went on the train and Zayda knows!

KORCZAK: Enough Motl! Enough about the train!

MOTL: No! Zayda knows! Zayda knows about the train and I'm going! When he comes I'm going! He'll take me with him! Zayda knows! Zayda knows!..."

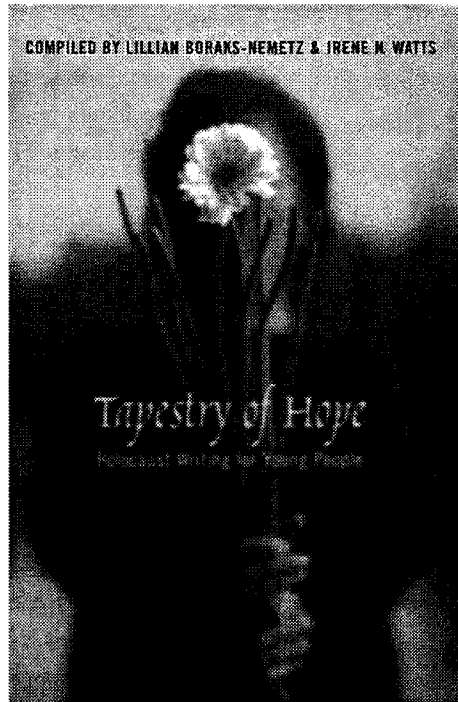
Published with the permission of the author. The passage was selected by Lilian Boraks-Nemetz.

The play is available from the Playwrights Guild of Canada, address is as follows:

*Playwrights Guild of Canada
54 Wolseley Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5T 1A5
Telephone: 416-703-0201
Fax: 416-703-0059
www.playwrightsguild*

Lost Childhood

By Malgorzata Burczycka



Excerpts of the play *Children of Night* have been recently published in the Anthology *Tapestry of Hope: Holocaust Writing for Young People*.

Edited by Lilian Boraks-Nemetz, a member of the Board of our Association, and Irene N. Watts. Toronto, 2003.

It was with a sense of apprehension that I set upon reading *Tapestry of Hope, Holocaust Writing for Young People* compiled by Lilian Boraks-Nemetz and Irene N. Watts.

As a member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada I helped to prepare the "Korczak and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto" exhibit in the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, and the stories depicted there weighted heavily on my heart. I did not feel ready to read more accounts of childrens' suffering.

Than I was reminded of some words spoken at the opening of the Korczak exhibit: "If we fail to remember the lives of the ones who were exterminated, we would act as if we again sentenced them to death". It would be a tragedy of a similar kind for us to forget the stories of those who survived. Surviving sometimes through sheer miracle, most often by the help of others, their stories throw light on to a topic otherwise overwhelmed with darkness. And this is the message behind the stories in *Tapestry of Hope*. The Anthology is addressed to young people; the third generation growing up after in the shadow of WW II. The imperative now is to promote knowledge of Holocaust, to incorporate its memory into the consciousness of the youth. To this knowledge the book *Tapestry of Hope* addresses an understanding of the strength and endurance of the human spirit told through the stories of child survivors. *Tapestry of Hope* is moving, educational and inspirational.

Malgorzata Burczycka, a member of the Board of The Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, journalist, author, and social worker.

Praise for *Tapestry of Hope*, the anthology

compiled by Lillian Boraks-Nemetz and Irene N. Watts

"...A fine anthology... with a useful time line and annotated bibliography of youth and adult books, ... an excellent resource for the Holocaust curriculum now being widely taught in junior highs and high schools across the country."

Booklist

"Many of the shorter selections would work well as read-aloud introductions to various parts of the Holocaust unit in school... . A helpful list of further reading at the end is marked according to age-level in this recommended purchase for school and public libraries..."

VOYA

"*Tapestry of Hope* is an important reference work for teachers of the Holocaust in secondary schools and colleges... this anthology is a complex answer to the often-asked question: Why did so many survivors of the Holocaust wait so long before telling their stories?"

The Globe and Mail

"... A timely addition to Holocaust resources..."

Quill & Quire

"... Very useful in a classroom situation when teaching about the Holocaust because a teacher has a large number of excerpts from which to choose... *Tapestry of Hope* has good educational value for both a history and a language arts program. Highly recommended."

CM Magazine

"... Filled with moments of discovery."

Canadian Jewish News

"These lessons of courage and the indomitable human spirit will uplift and inspire."

The St. John's Telegram

"The book's excellent selections, its fresh approach to a difficult subject, and its uplifting message make it a must-read for those young people and adults interested in Holocaust studies and certainly a must-have for school and family libraries."

Children's Book News

"These accounts of childhood during the Holocaust are, of course, about loss, suffering and bewilderment, but also are filled with courage, hope, and the indomitable will to survive."

The Ottawa Citizen

"This understated collection is profound. Most riveting are the heartbreaking, yet courageous stories of survivors ... an absorbing read for any age."

The Edmonton journal

"*Tapestry of Hope* is an extraordinary anthology, which gathers together first person accounts and well-known published writing from authors such as Mordechai Richler and Leonard Cohen, to reveal the heartbreak, courage, and hope that define one of history's darkest hours. Through poetry, drama, prose, and first hand accounts, the contributors address different aspects of the Holocaust. Some write about hiding from the Nazis. Others record the misery of life in the ghettos, the struggle for survival in the camps, resistance and life after the Holocaust. Although each selection encompasses the terror and evil of the times, it also reflects the reliance of the human spirit, and comes together to create what is truly a tapestry of hope for readers young and old."

Zachor -Remember

TAPESTRY OF HOPE

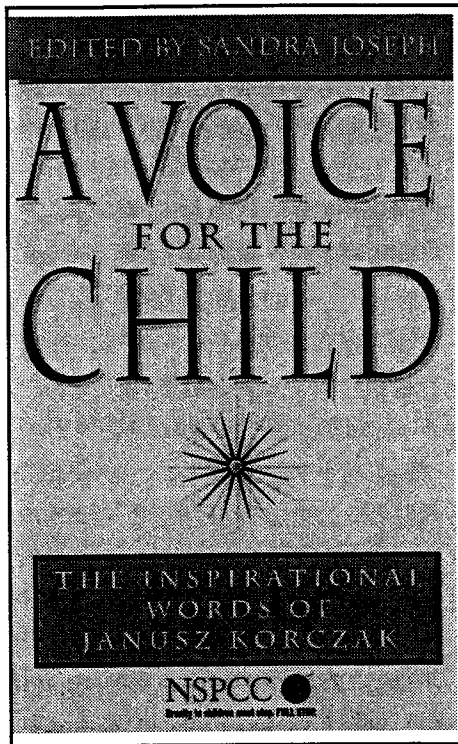
- * Has been named an Honor Book by the Society of School Librarians International Book Awards. Each year SSLI selects one best book and nine honor books in seven categories of elementary and secondary children's books.
- * Chosen as an Honor Book of 2004 by the International Association of Libraries.
- * Won the distinction of the BC Book Prize Honor Book, a 2004 finalist for the Sheila A. Egoff award for Young Adult Literature.
- * Nominated as best young adult book of 2004 by the Canadian Libraries Association.
- * Winner of the Canadian Jewish Book Award in Holocaust Studies for 2004 .

Our congratulations to the authors!!!

Order a book *Tapestry of Hope* by phone 1-888-523 9292 or visit www.tundrabooks.com

A Voice for the Child

The Inspirational Words of Janusz Korczak



Edited by Sandra Joseph.

Translated from Polish by Theresa Prout and Anne Hargest Gorzelak

xxx

I am not here to be loved and admired, but to act and love. It is not the duty of people to help me, but it is my duty to look after the world, and the people in it.

xxx

Be yourself and seek your own path. Know yourself before you attempt to get to know children. Become aware of what you yourself are capable of before you attempt to outline the rights and responsibilities of children. First and foremost you must realize that you too are a child, whom you must first get to know, to bring up and to educate.

xxx

Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously, and to be treated with tenderness and respect. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be - 'the unknown person' inside each of them is our hope for the future.

xxx

If we are constantly astonished at the child's perceptiveness, it means that we do not take them seriously.

xxx

Do allow children to make mistakes and to joyfully strive for improvement.

Children love laughter, running about and playing tricks. If your own life is like a graveyard to you - leave children free to see it as a pasture.

xxx

The child is not foolish, there are no more fools among them than among adults.

xxx

We don't like it when children criticize us. They are not permitted to notice our mistakes, or absurdities. We appear before them in the garb of perfection. We play with children using marking cards. We win against the low cards of childhood with the aces of adulthood. Cheaters that we are, we shuffle the cards in such a way that we deal ourselves everything.

xxx

Under identical clothes beat a hundred different hearts, and each one is another difficulty, another task, another worry and care.

xxx

There seems to be two kinds of existence. One serious and respectable. The other indulgently tolerated and somehow less valuable. We use expressions 'Man of the future' implying by this that the child 'will be'. Children make up a large proportion of humanity, of the population of the nation. They are our constant companions. They are here now. They always have been and they always will be.

xxx

There are many terrible things in this world but the worst is when a child is afraid of his father, mother or teacher. He fears them, instead of loving and trusting them.

xxx

The child's thinking is neither more limited nor inferior to that of an adult. It is different. The child thinks with feelings and not with the intellect. That is why communication is so complicated and speaking with children is a difficult art.

Source: A Voice for the Child. The inspirational words of Janusz Korczak. London, 1999.

Published with the permission of Sandra Joseph.

Excerpts selected by Olga Medvedeva.

A Jewish Children's Home in Post-War France

By Rene Goldman

As soon as France was liberated, Jewish organizations set out to retrieve children, who had survived hiding in Gentile homes or Catholic institutions. The task of raising those children who had been orphaned and were traumatized by their experience, proved to be no less daunting than the danger-ridden endeavor to hide them from the Nazis and their collaborators, albeit in a different way. Pedagogy became now even more important than financial resources and administrative competence. Each of the several organizations established its own network of group homes, which were called "maisons d'enfants" (children's homes), instead of the depressingly institutional designation of "orphelins" (orphanages).

I was brought up in a succession of four children's homes run by the Commission Centrale de l'Enfance (CCE), an organ of the urban Jewish communist resistance organization UJRE. The CCE was for several years chaired by Sophie Schwartz-Michnik, who in her resistance activity in Paris and Lyon had distinguished herself by organizing the hiding of children. Our educators (called "moniteurs") drew their pedagogical guidelines from the teachings of Dr. Janusz Korczak, although Anton Makarenko also served as a model of progressive pedagogy. The leading professional pedagogue of the CCE was Mathilde Seibald, who in 1937 underwent a period of training in Dr. Korczak's orphanage on Krochmalna Street in Warsaw. Mathilde was a wise and warm-hearted woman, totally dedicated. She looked upon all of

us, alumni of the homes who remained in contact with her over the decades, as her "children". Every time I visited her, when I traveled to Paris, she greeted me like a mother, calling me "mon petit Rene".

The home in the Parisian suburb of Livry-Gargan, where I spent the years 1948 to 1950 was the organization's finest example of Korczak's "children's republic". Each of the forty-odd children aged 12 to 18, who lived in it, belonged to one of eight commissions: hygiene and cleanliness (which assigned the house-cleaning chores); sports and leisure; culture; press; workshops, etc. The home was administered by a director, whom we called "Madame Helene" and addressed using the polite pronoun "vous", whereas our three "moniteurs" were called by their first name and addressed with the familiar "tu". Our chief-educator: Henri Goldberg, an Alsatian Jew, whom everyone called "Heini", was a young man of amazing ability, imagination, and resourcefulness. Heini, who developed the formal structure of our "republic", together with his wife Hanka, a native of Warsaw, the occasional third councilor, and the chairpersons of the eight commissions, the latter being elected at the general assembly, all formed the "Direction" (directorate), the governing body of our republic. That body met frequently to discuss current activities. Important matters were referred to the general assembly, which met about once a month and decided on the basis of majority vote. However, we never met as a children's court, as was the case in Dr. Korczak's homes. When a serious breach

of discipline occurred, Heini resorted to the prerogative of his authority, although he did on occasion consult the directorate.

Our "republic" even had an anthem, for which, as an "established" poet, I wrote the lyrics, and the composer Ivan Kholodenko, who was a frequent visitor, wrote the music. Another visitor friend of our home was Fessler, former director of a Yiddish theatre in Buenos Aires, who led us in staging theatricals. Ours was a richly varied life. We attended different schools, academic and vocational. Housed in a large cabin behind the house were: embroidery, photographic frames, book binding, printing, and other workshops, in which we spent hours on Thursdays (there was no school on Thursday in France) and Sundays. Every Saturday night after dinner the tables of the dining-room were set aside and the stools arranged in a circle, for a "veillee" (vigil), i.e. an evening of games, singing, telling or reading of stories, and individual performances. In addition, Heini organized us into a choir, which sang in four voices and performed in various venues, notably on Jewish occasions in Paris. Once a year in summer we held an open house ("kermesse"), at which we displayed and sold the products of our workshops, performed theatricals under the direction of Fessler, and our choir sang.

I successively chaired the culture commission, which was responsible for the library (where some of us did our home work) and the press commission. The latter edited, besides a permanent bulletin board, our

A Jewish Children's Home in Post-War France

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monthly "journal mural", which was a large framed wall surface, to which pinned were, with an eye for aesthetic appearance, hand-written articles relating to our activities, poems, drawings, water-colours, etc. My partners and I invited contributions, edited the articles for spelling, grammar, and style (as was done in the French classroom of those times, when rhetoric was prized), and had them copied "in clean" with illustrations in the margins.

Some people at the time criticized the CCE, claiming that it did not prepare us for life in the "real world". The same charge had been leveled against Dr. Korczak, who dismissed it with the question "do you want me to put lice in the children's hair and bugs in their bed?" There were, nevertheless, significant failings in the CCE experiment, the most deleterious of which was the communist indoctrination to which we were subjected. We, who had suffered in the Shoah, were simply not allowed to be carefree children for a few years. This fact has left many of the alumni embittered. Worst of all, the end result of the education that my generation received at the hand of those who raised us, is that most of the alumni were left deplorably ignorant of our Jewish heritage, and indifferent to it. Only the few of us who in adult life acquired the will and extended the required efforts, succeeded in becoming committed and proud Jews. We must nevertheless recognize that our educators were unquestionably idealistic and wholehearted in their devotion to what in their eyes was the road to a happy future without social injustice and oppres-

sion. We cannot judge them from the perspective of our awareness of today. I believe that it is their accomplishments, rather than their failings which, in the distant perspective of half a century ought to stand foremost in our memories and in our hearts. Most of them are no longer with us; Mathilde, Heini, and Hanka, all died in 2003. *Zichronam livracha*: may they rest in peace.

Rene Goldman, Professor Emeritus of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver).

To amaze children

An oral testimony recorded by Olga Medvedeva

Krystyna Endelman, daughter of the famous Polish writer Halina Gorska (1898-1942) ("O księciu Gotfrydzie, Rycerzu Gwiazdy Wigilijnej", "Nad czarna woda", "Chłopcy z ulic miasta") resides in Vancouver.

She recollects:

My mother visited Warsaw quite often in order to discuss professional matters with her publishers. When she returned to Lvov she always told me (I was a child then) something interesting about the people she had met.

Once she told me she had paid a visit to Janusz Korczak at his orphanage. While they were talking in the hall, a boy was hanging around impatiently. It was clear that he wanted to ask Dr. Korczak about something very important to him but he did not have the courage to interrupt them. Eventually he could not stand aside any longer and he came up to Korczak and asked:

- How come there is hair on your beard but there is no hair on your head?

Korczak answered without a moment's hesitation:

- It all had moved.

The boy walked away dumbfounded.

Korczak had the talent to amaze children.

Korczak's Children

by Maria Breitman

1991. International Korczak Conference. A bus from Arlozorov St. 102 - the office of The Janusz Korczak Association of Israel in Tel-Aviv - is leaving for Jerusalem. I am a newcomer in Israel and feel as such. My Hebrew still is not as good as I would like it to be, I hardly know anyone on the bus... I try to figure out to which section I should go to.

I study the program. Here it is! Self-government in the Korczak orphanage. If they are to be somewhere - the ones I have come here for - then for sure, they will be right there. There are not so many places left to sit in the room. I hide myself in the back row.

Wanda, the moderator, is happy to lead the discussion at this section:

"Even though I was not Korczak's student and did not work with him,

(Lightning strikes me: so that's who they are, these people around me!)

I saw him twice. The last time from a roof in the ghetto, when they took him and the children..."

I am all ears. I want to understand everything these people have to say, and surprisingly enough, I do! Slowly, little by little, from the depth of my soul rises a wonderful, light and blissful feeling, as a contrast to the gloomy, solemn and hard one, always comes to me when reading Korczak and - mostly - about him. That usual feeling is like realizing the emptiness of the world without him and his children - all dead and gone, all hopes lost, nowhere to go, nothing left behind.

No! That's not the whole truth. Here they

are, his legacy - alive and prominent.

Flirtatious, serious, clever and understanding girls, boys - fighters and jokers. I see them now, I see them as they were years ago, and their grown-up's outfits, grey hair do not interfere with this vision. Korczak worked at the orphanage for such a long time! There were generations after generations coming from beneath his wings to the real world...

Erna grew enthusiastic about Korczak's work the way I did - through his papers and books. And she was lucky to have an opportunity to work with him.

"I had nobody in Warsaw, - she says, - I was studying at Lvov University. So, I wrote a letter and just enclosed my picture, and got an answer: I had been accepted."

She talks about Korczak's "memory post cards". If you were sure you had the right for one, write a letter - but be clear and try to be convincing - and you might receive one. For instance, if for nothing else, then for being the worst behaved kid. Get your memory post card and make yourself better!

She mentions the special days in the orphanage's life. On the shortest day of the year - December 22 - it makes no sense to wake up and you can stay in bed all day long. And on the shortest night, June 22, it makes no sense to go to bed - and you are allowed not to sleep. And Dirty Day! If you dare to wash your face on that day, you pay a fee.

It has gotten warm in the room now.

There are two Sarahs: nervous Sarah, who has to read her notes, and brave Sarah, who is very good in speaking.

And the boys!

Shlamek (one could imagine him as a nine year old boy, even under his moustache) with great enthusiasm relates about the Court. "What a great thing! No more beatings in the corner, if someone is stronger than you, no more teasing, if you dare to tell on him. Court will be Court, and it's not a fight, it's a serious thing. It gave you a feeling of protection and safety.

Sometimes it was enough just to say - leave me alone, or I'll take you to the Court."

And, with a vivid sparks in his eyes:

"You probably know that Doctor took himself to the Court and even got "setka" once (article No 100 of the orphanage's Code). No, no, no!!! Three times, he got it three times! There were two more! Once, it was in Goclawek, summer camp. It was too hot, so we could not fall asleep in the evening. Korczak said: let's go for a picnic in the woods! Well, you need food for a picnic, don't you? So he took out a small glass from the cupboard, in the kitchen, and helped Srulek to get through it to get some food... We come back, with a song, in the morning. And the girls know nothing... - Pan Doctor, somebody has stolen food from the kitchen! - It's not thieves, it's me...

So he's got the second setka.

And the third time, the third time - for pants. You see, somehow the boys' pants started to rip from behind, from top to bottom, every day. Fix them - again, fix - again! What the heck? So he found out that we are sliding down the handrail, on our bottoms, and he wanted to try himself - and there were nails!!! - and he, he, too... - to our mutual delight, we can't stop laughing at this picture."

Korczaks Children

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Here was Korczak. Here he was, in all of them. They have been living together for years. They talk about him with love and smiles, gently and cheerfully, they are recalling good times they had had with him. Not only grief and despair, as it might look like from our point of view through History. They talk about him... as though we are talking about our fathers, even if they are not with us anymore. Reminiscing about - just about regular family life as one Home and Family, not only as about one of the most tragic symbols of the Holocaust...

Itzik is so calm, so positive and down-to-earth. When he was born his father had already been gone for three months. When he grew a bit older, his mother took him to Doctor, and Doctor asked:

"Tell me what kind of a rascal you are, this big - indicating the space between his fore finger and thumb - or this small - indicating the space between his widespread arms...

And I was a street kid, and I swore... oh did I swear?! If I could translate it all into Hebrew... (us gasping in awe in a background). Even though some of those expressions were pretty beautiful... May you have a wooden head and glass eyes, and may they split and shatter!!! Hm, yeah... So... One time I was swearing at someone and Doctor was passing by. And they all screamed: Pan Doctor, he's swearing, he's swearing again! They were always telling on me, he was fed up, and he yelled - I don't know how to say it in Hebrew - Psia kosc sloniowa!!!! - and clamped his mouth shut at once..."

"And you?" - goads the public.

"And I... I did not swear... Anymore... Ever..." - he adds, not very convincingly.

"And then my mother died, too, and they

sent me to Russia. We had some relatives there. One day I saw in a magazine, the Jewish magazine, *Emet* it was called, - I saw the portrait of the Doctor dressed up in his officer's uniform. So I cut it out, glued it on a piece of cardboard, put it in my pocket, - he claps himself on a chest. - And I showed it to the boys - he stretches his palm out high, proudly - This is my father!"

His voice gives out... He returns to his seat.

It was that. All these people - it was him, it was Korczak.

On our way back to Tel-Aviv, on the same bus - I know now who I am with. Korczak's children.

I study Itzik's face when he's not looking: and what do you know... they look alike.

Maria Breitman, a member of the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada. Korczak's philosophy of education was a topic of her studies at Voronezh University, Russia. Maria currently lives in Toronto. Visit her Korczak web site <http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Palms/4559/korczak.htm>

The Saint Korczak

From the article "Do We Need Church?" published in Polish weekly Tygodnik Powszechny No 46, November 16, 2003.

Translated from Polish by L. Boraks-Nemetz

Father Kloczowski:

"...I would like to note the ecclesiastic dimension of Matthew's vision: To reach God, I must first reach other human beings.

The paradoxical truth in Christianity is that the road to the Creator is neither an escape route to heaven, nor an exile inside one's own mournful heart, but can only be found in the face of one's fellow. To elaborate this point, I often refer to a story that evolves in the spirit of the New Age. A certain lady once asked both the Christian and the Hindu children about the place where God dwells. "In the heavens," replied the Christian children. "In the heart," replied the Hindu youngsters. However, I believe that God lives neither here, nor there, but dwells in the face of the other person. The evangelical periscope, which we are discussing here, confirms my belief that the Church stands in the place where I lower my head with regard for the other, and treat that person with kindness. And that is why in my eyes, Janusz Korczak is a saint..."

UNDERSTANDING KORCZAK

"Such a Diverse World": Janusz Korczak's Pedagogy & Linguistics

By Olga Medvedeva

Since 1992 Janusz Korczak Complete Works in Polish is being gradually published by International Janusz Korczak Association along with the Institute of Literary Studies of the Academy of Humanities of Poland. This is a result of hard work of the editors: Aleksander Lewin (a professor and a renown expert on Korczak's heritage who died in Warsaw in 2002) Stefan Woloszyn, Hanna Kirchner and Marta Ciesielska. So far 12 volumes have already appeared. Next five volumes are expected to be out in the near future.

In 2003 Volume 11, Part 1 was published in Warsaw: Janusz Korczak. *Prawidła życia. Publicystyka dla dzieci. (Rules of Life. Essays for Children).*

Below are some thoughts on Korczak's Rules of Life.

Everyone, whether it is a professional educator or a parent, touching the works of Janusz Korczak, notices straight away that they do not have specific features of a pedagogical text. Although there are no general rules of writing for pedagogical texts, usually they are discernible because of their correspondence with certain ideas on this kind of texts, which were formed on the basis of an acquaintance of a considerable number of works of this sort. Against this background Korczak's texts are certainly perceived as different, stepping over the limits, i.e. non-classical.

Just as the other pedagogues did, Korczak operated only with words. In fact, he did not have anything else to operate with - pedagogy hardly has any other means than words. Besides, as is generally known, Korczak was not only a pedagogue, he was a writer as well. That means that his attitude to words obviously was profound, one can say, even intimate. Creation and use of words were for him very significant acts and, maybe, even the most important acts of his life.

We shall try to scrutinize one of Korczak's text - *Rules of Life* just from this point of view: how does the author operate with words. This particular text has been chosen as representative because of the following reasons: this text had been written in 1929 by a mature author; it is vast enough (one hundred pages); it is stylistically homogeneous and, finally, it is absolutely recognizable, it distinctly expresses the basic idea of

Korczak's pedagogy - respect to a child (there are no children - there are people).

So, what are the words the Korczak's pedagogy was generated from?

The book *Rules of Life* has a puzzling subtitle - "Pedagogy for young and adults".

What is behind it? Is this book meant for reading by children (teenagers, young adults) together with their parents or, perhaps, it could be used as material for discussion on the above mentioned topic by educators along with their pupils?

One can distinctly trace two crossing plans in the book: how children see grown-ups, and how adults treat children. Their relationships are depicted in it as a very serious life drama. As a matter of fact, in *Rules of Life* Korczak sometimes admonishes adults: "An educator should be patient..." - and at the same time he addresses his words directly to children: "Dear reader! I know, that you have troubles, that adults neglect and offend you" .

But does Korczak really address these words to a child?

The fact, that the addressee of his books is mixed age wise, usually is not put under doubt: "Chapters of *Rules of Life* are similar to the collective articles of the weekly *The Little Review* - to a genre which prevailed in it... Korczak combined in the articles different opinions and commented on them. That allowed the readers to work

out opinions of their own. The result was that new letters were received from readers" (375). However, the book, against the periodical, has a different, even though dialogical, character of communication and different type of feedback. It is hardly imaginable that a young reader would get acquainted with this kind of book. And if so, isn't the subtitle in which both subjects of pedagogy - adults and children - are mentioned simultaneously, just a sly idea of Korczak-writer?

In his foreword to *Rules of Life* Korczak declares, that "it is a scientific book" (8). But the reader, instead of the usual for pedagogical text powerful "we" or impersonal and faceless "it seems to be", which confidently proclaim obtained and unshakable truth, right on the first page collides with the doubting, lonely "I":

"I was afraid, that they will get angry at me.

I was afraid, that they will say:

"That [this book] will bother children" (7).

One can trace along the whole book such a chain of "doubting" verbs: the author "hesitates", "is afraid", "convinces from his own experience", "notices" (as a result of observation), "makes mistakes", "does not understand", and "does not know":

"... Children think that adults know everything and can answer any question they have. But in fact we do not know, we really do not know" (59).

"Such a Diverse World"

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Sometimes Korczak searches answers in his talks to children and he finds them there.

The author names *Rules of Life* "an attempt", "an experiment". He expected criticism not only from parents, but also from his colleagues, for whom the ground on which Korczak builds his theory, looks incredibly unsteady. Korczak does not mind to start a polemic with them.

No doubt, at that time Korczak's book was an experimental pedagogy. One can say even more radically - it was - and it remains - a risky pedagogy.

Throughout the whole Korczak's book a motive of astonishment can be noticed: "It seems strange, that a person does not know, what he or she actually is, he/she does not know himself/herself" (59); "This is a very strange feeling - fear" (60); "Very strange is this world. Strange are trees which live strange lives. Strange are small bugs, whose life is so short. Strange are fish which live in the water, in which a human being chokes and dies. Strange is everything, that jumps and flies: a grasshopper and a bird, and a butterfly, and animals are strange too: a cat, a dog, a lion, an elephant. - And strange is a human being. It is like there is a whole world in each person" (58); " - It is strange. - What is strange? - Everything. Everything that a person remembers and that he forgets. And how a person falls asleep, and what he sees in his dreams, and how he wakes up, what happened and will never happen again. Both recollections and memory, both a dream and an intention, and a decision" (96).

One can hardly consider astonishment as a characteristic of initial pedagogical position. More likely, it is a children's point of view. That suggests that the author

describes a process of cognition, as if he learns what the world is together with children. Korczak takes children's side. He writes *Rules of Life* not for children, but on behalf of them, as if he writes under the order of children.

That is why the fact that Korczak borrows the name of his book from a child is not surprising:

"Once a boy said to me:

- We have a lot of troubles because we don't know rules of life. ...

I took a sheet of paper and wrote down: Rules of Life. I looked at it.

The boy was right: well said" (7-8).

It sounds natural because of the fact, that the author not only "allows" a child to speak, but he himself speaks for a child and instead of a child like in the following case: "Really I often don't know what makes them [adults] laugh" (25).

An adult - the author and his hero - a child think in unison.

As a further proof of the same is a supplement to the book "Three short additional texts". In the latter Korczak writes:

"It is so difficult for children to speak out, what they feel and what they think, because they have to speak with words.

And to write is even more difficult. But children are poets and philosophers" (100).

In this way Korczak leads readers unambiguously to understand, that he not only quotes children's phrases, which he heard, but speaks and writes out their thoughts and feelings for/instead/on behalf of children.

The book *Rules of Life* consists of 15 chapters. Each of them is devoted to different spheres of children's life. More than half from them have symmetric names, for example: "Rich - Poor", "Merits - Demerits", "Boys - Girls", "Past - Future" ... In those with no symmetry in the headings, one can easily figure out the

second part of an opposition: "School [- Home]", "Entertainment [- Work]", "Health [- Illness]" etc. etc. This is not by chance.

Korczak in his book refers to numerous cases regarding relationships between children and adults from his own educational practice. But the case (the story) is not a main element of the text's structure. The main element is a symmetry mentioned above which receives in the text of the book an original development. One repeatedly meets in the text symmetric syntactic constructions which due to the frequency of their use could be recognized as key-constructions. It is necessary to add, that usage of the same or similar constructions in such abundance is more specific for an oral, than for a written speech. In Korczak's text this rhetorical technique is used rather as a linguistic than as a literary device (it is not a part of the certain literary system: there is no fiction, neither a plot nor a classical composition in the book).

A symmetric tone in *Rules of Life* is set up by a child - the same Korczak's "co-author" who has prompted to the writer the name of the book. The boy says: "Sometimes grown-ups explain calmly, but often they become angry ... and different opposite thoughts come to mind" (7). In a way this kind of binary opposition recreates patterns of a child's thinking, which would help him to apprehend the world around him, to understand what is good and what is bad and, simply, not to be lost in it. Korczak accepts and supports this "binarity", through which the children's concept of the world speaks.

Anyhow, different symmetric constructions: oppositional, antithetic and antonymous - fill in the pages of Korczak's book. Let us give only a few out of numerous examples. In some of them one can clearly hear the author's voice, while in others his voice merges to the one of a child:

"One day is cheerful, the other is sad, one

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"Such a Diverse World"

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deal can be easily done, and another can not be done at all. Now the Sun shines, now it rains" (10); "One wants to play, another - to read" (12); "One puts on his clothes fast, he does everything fast: another puts on one stocking and takes a rest, fixes his shoelaces and meditates" (43); "One reads a book and thinks, that it is piece of work, for another reading is the best rest. ... What is boring for one, for another is amusing..." (46). Sometimes Korczak uses the same construction eight times in succession (chapter "Abilities").

Korczak uses also other - similar form-and-semantics wise - constructions such as:

"there are those who ...and there are others who...", "everyone [makes something] differently":

"There are people passive and there are active" (47); "There are such people for whom it makes no difference that someone has more money..., but there are also poor people who don't like rich ones..." (56); "Everyone works in his own way and rests in his own way" (46); "Sometimes the one who is older is thoughtless, and the one who is younger - is more responsible" (52); "Sometimes you know, what you are afraid of, and sometimes you do not" (61) etc.

The next big group of syntactic constructions represented in *Rules of Life* are alternative ones, original children's "Either/Or", "Diapsalmata" with its metrical scheme: "It is fun to dig into the soil, to cut a cardboard and plywood, to draw, to mould, to cut out, to play harmonic and violin - if so, is it an entertainment or work?" (46); "Is the teacher going to call me to the blackboard, will he be in good mood or in bad, will he praise me or scold me, will he get angry at all of us or just at one and at whom?" (43); the child gets lost in the park, and "when he will be found, it is either joy, or anger and shout, slap and tears" (31); Mum can be "either kind and

cheerful or angry, in good health or in sickness" (9).

All these syntactic constructions at first sight may seem simple and schematic, but they are not. Especially when they get acquired nuances and overtones:

"Each person has merits and demerits, everyone has different. One has more merits, another - more demerits. There are unpleasant demerits and not so much unpleasant, visible or less visible. Sometimes demerits are very unpleasant for the others around, and sometimes even more for the person, who has them. Some demerits are easy to fight with, some are hard. Sometimes one even can not say is it merit or demerit" (83).

Actually in most of the cases the oppositions in *Rules of Life* are complementary. The same person gains different faces in different contexts, the same fact obtains different meanings in different circumstances:

"I am the same, but sometimes cheerful, sometimes sad. And every time I see something else and think about something else. And I even don't know what will happen: am I going to play or I will get angry at my friend and will fight with him" (59).

Thus, oppositional, complementary and alternative constructions - all of them generate reflection.

What is more, Korczak supplements these constructions with descriptive and enumerative ones. He varies situations and "strings" one onto another all possible predicates, subjects and adverbial modifiers, some similar and some contrasting, some more general and some more specific. He expands a phrase and splits it with details:

"Mothers happen to be young, jolly and smiling, worried, tired, busy, educated and not educated, rich and poor, in hats or in scarfs"; "Many children live with strangers...: in hospitals, boarding schools,

shelters, foster homes" (10); "People live in big cities and in towns and in villages. One's house can be a hut, a small house, a room in a wooden house, one room or many rooms in the big house made of bricks and a palace. The house can be a property of one's parents or rented from the owner..." (15).

While for "scientific" pedagogy it would be enough to say: "The worst is, when younger one disturbs the older one to do his home-work", Korczak says: "The worst is, when younger one disturbs the older one to do his home-work. He pushes, bothers, gets on a table, touches an ink-pot..." (12). From pragmatic point of view the second sentence is redundant. But it is not the same for Korczak. He visualizes, makes situations tangible for readers: Adults say: "[Child] spoiled [something], broke, made mess" (16); "Stubborn, scamp, unruly, knotty" (20); "Do not go far away, come up closer, stay here and play" (30); "I don't have time. I don't know. Get behind. Don't get on my nerves. You are still too young" (40). Probably, Korczak in this way wants to help adults to recognize in these situations themselves?

The author uses one more similar device: he asks different children the same question and receives different answers:

" - Say honestly: are you a good boy?"

Answers:

- I don't know.

- Sometimes yes, sometimes so-so.

- Perhaps, yes.

- Sometimes I am as if I had a demon in me.

- Not exactly, probably.

- Different crazy ideas very often come to my mind.

- I don't do anything bad, unless somebody talks me into something bad" (83). Korczak mercilessly uses similar constructions in a rather extended book space and excessively accumulates similar examples.

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What is the goal that he is trying to reach? Why does he take a risk to be monotonous? (Though we must say he organizes material in such a way, that readers, involved in a certain rhythm, do not get bored). For what reason does he reduce a story to a phrase? Probably, because he believes that if he describes the complete story, the book would be too thick, and adults would not have enough time or patience to read it through to the end? Or perhaps, he hopes that it is the way to reach to the adult's hearts?

But not only that. The syntactic constructions used in abundance by Korczak are ontological by themselves. In the oppositional, complementary and alternative constructions - in a single phrase (not only in a text as a whole) Korczak locks up a vision of the world in which - both children and adults - live in diversity. Thus, diverse is also the pedagogical relationship "a child - an adult", which Korczak concretizes and individualizes at most.

When the issue is a child, Korczak becomes a decisive opponent of generalizations like "all of them are the same". For such an approach he definitely says "no", "not correct", "not always", "not all of kids". In Korczak's pedagogy all children are not like all, everyone is not like everyone:

"I have noticed, that only stupid people would like, that all people are similar. A clever person is glad, that there are in the world day and night, summer and winter, young and old, that there are a moth and a bird, that flowers are of different colors, and eyes are of different colors, that there are girls and boys. Those who do not like to think are irritated with a diversity which forces one to think" (94).

In this diversity, in this "such a diverse world" (10) a child himself learns "rules of

life". Korczak only shares with him his own rules which "were given to him from his own experiences". It happens that Korczak remains demanding - when he speaks about value of will, tolerance, forgiveness and generosity or about such major shortcomings, as jealousy, flattery, smoking or drinking etc. In all the other rules he is flexible and children are free.

"I do not say: - Play this or that game. Play with these and with those. In order to play, it is necessary to have a good friend and an inspiration, i.e. freedom" (51); "Gradually everyone learns to be cautious, rules made by strangers help the least" (79); "What rules of life follow from this, everyone will guess" (81); "It is necessary to know a lot and to think a lot, and even then a person often makes mistakes and does not know everything" (57).

In Korczak's book with an "instructive" name *Rules of Life* one can not find answers like those which are given in contemporary bestsellers that could be named generally - "How to become better parent/educator" or "How to raise a good child".

Symmetry and descriptivity of *Rules of Life* generates Korczak's pedagogical humanity. His syntax gains moral sense. As a matter of fact, Korczak, telling children about rules of life, explains adults children's feelings and thoughts. Korczak's pedagogy in this respect is more psychology than pedagogy as such. He literally enlightens adults, shedding light on a child.

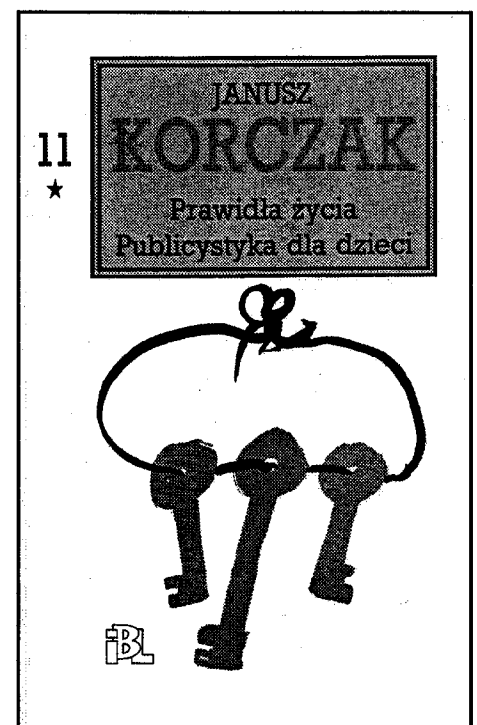
Yes, it is risky pedagogy, but also metaphysical and dialogical one. Because it explains hardship of existence and hardship of relationship. It is about a duty which everyone has: to try to understand how this world is built and what is a goal. It is about everyone's duty to consciously built relationships with children, here and now, facing the extreme diversity of the world.

"I am completing this small book with regret. With anxiety I am completing this my experiment" (95), - the author writes in the last chapter of his book.

There are two basic "categories" of Korczak's pedagogy clearly visible in these final words - "the sadness and the work" (*Prayer of an Educator*). These "categories" exist in all his books. In *Rules of Life*, this typical Korczakian "integrated", "interdisciplinary" text, the pedagogue is inseparable from the writer. As the pedagogue, Korczak expressed in it his professional credo, as the writer he found for it unique and exact words.

The talent and the mission of Janusz Korczak discovered each other.

Olga Medvedeva, a member of the Board of The Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, an independent researcher.



Most recent volume of Korczak Complete Works

LETTERS FROM KORCZAK FRIENDS

A Son of Four Parents

My name is Severin Szperling. I was born in March 1940 in Czestochowa, Poland, which had already been under Nazi occupation for seven months. My parents and I lived in the Jewish Quarter. In 1942, I was safely smuggled from the Ghetto to the Aryan side, where a Christian couple hid me until the end of World War II in 1945. I continued to live with them until 1968.

The couple promised my parents that they would keep me safe until their return, but they never came back. Later, I was told that my parents were executed in July 1943 at a Jewish cemetery in my hometown. I was an only child to my biological parents and an only child to my Christian parents.

In 1970, I left Czestochowa for the USA. Now, when I return to my hometown, I visit two cemeteries - that of my biological parents and that of my Christian parents.

In memory of my biological parents, I am preparing a catalog containing descriptions of worldwide commemorative Holocaust medals. I am collecting medals related to: Nazi Concentration Camps, the Anniversary of the Liberation of the Camps, the Ghetto Uprising, Museums and Memorials, and to persons like Anne Frank, Raoul Wallenberg and Janusz Korczak.

One section of my collection is representations of Janusz Korczak (Hersz/Henryk Goldszmit, 1878/1879-1942) on medals and coins from Poland and Israel. To the best of my knowledge, only three countries issued numismatic items related to Korczak: Poland, Israel and Russia.

In Poland, the Polish Government issued circulated and un-circulated coins depicting Janusz Korczak in 1978; 100 zloty circulated silver coins (coin 1) and 100 zloty un-circulated nickel and silver coins in very limited edition (coin 2).

Poland issued 20 medals and coins throughout the years. The Polish State Mint struck some of them, and others were cast in bronze, and privately produced. The Polish Red Cross Club by the Ship Yard was named after Korczak and issued the same medals in three different metals with diameters of 33 mm (medal 3). A graduate student at a local art school created another single medal of Korczak. In Lublin, Poland, the Organization of the International Congress of Poets "Arcadia" in 1996 issued 6 heavy cast bronze medals of Korczak as a prize for high school students (medal 10).

In 1983, the Polish State Mint struck a 70 mm medal in bronze, silver plate and gold plate to commemorate the National Youth Philatelic Exhibition. On the obverse is a portrait of Korczak and on the reverse, school children (medal 4). The Polish State Mint in Warsaw, to commemorate Korczak's 100th birthday, struck two different medals of him. On the reverse side (medal 5) there are faces of children, and another medal (6), on the obverse a profile of Korczak and children in a concentration camp with barbed wire around them. In 1994 the Museum of Auschwitz issued a cast bronze; one side of the 125x132 mm medal shows the portrait of Korczak and children walking to the cattle wagon (medal 7).

In Israel, the Ghetto Fighter's House issued five of the same medals: four 59 mm in bronze, silver, silver and gold plate, and one 35 mm in silver. On the obverse is a portrait of Korczak, and on the reverse, boys and girls holding hands (medal 8).

I only have three of these medals in my collection.

In Russia several years ago, the St. Petersburg Organization of Janusz Korczak issued a 35 mm medal (9), which I do not have in my collection.

Dear readers, the above-pictured medals are part of my 30-year collection. I am still searching for medals: Janusz Korczak issued in St. Petersburg and in Israel, and of the 50th Anniversary of the Massacre at Babi Yar (Kiev, Ukraine).

If anyone has additional information regarding the medals described above please contact me. I am very interested in purchasing them to expand my collection.

My address:

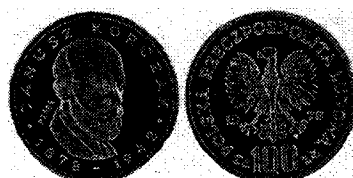
Severin Szperling
431 S. Via de Los Rosales
Tucson, Arizona 85711, USA
Phone: 520.790-9599
e-mail: jam1442@aol.com

I am a member of: ANA, American Numismatic Association; AINA, American-Israel Numismatic Association; PANA, Polish-American Numismatic Association; IN, International Numismatic.

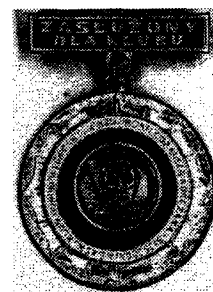
*Thank you,
Severin Szperling*



coin 1



coin 2



medal 3

Two new books related to Korczak have been published in Poland in Polish.
 These are from the series In Korczak's circle:
 Themes People Documents



medal 4



medal 5



medal 6



medal 7



medal 8



medal 9



medal 10



Ida Merzan. Dzieci miłość moja, duma moja, troska moja. Warszawa 2002
 Ida Merzan, Children my love, my pride and my care. Warsaw 2002



Stefania Wilczyńska. Słowo do dzieci i wychowawców. Warszawa 2004
 Stefania Wilczyńska, Speaking to Children and Educators. Warsaw 2004

Reviews of these books will be published in the next issue of our Newsletter.

KORCZAK ON THE NET

Janusz Korczak International Newsletter.
Postbus 700481007 KA Amsterdam, Netherlands
email: newsletter@korczak.nl

THE JANUSZ KORCZAK COMMUNICATION CENTER
can be reached in English, Polish and German. It has a biography and other materials, including an on-line version of The Life and Death of Janusz Korczak by Betty Jean Lifton

<http://korczak.com/englisch.htm>

It has different links to other Korczak-related sites, and a lot of Holocaust-related information.

GHETTO FIGHTERS' HOUSE IN ISRAEL presents their materials in English and Hebrew

<http://www.korczak-school.org.il/>

Here you will find information about the Ghetto Fighters' Museum's online programs that deal with the Holocaust and the experiences of the Jewish children who lived through it.

KORCZAK AT YAD-VASHEM IN JERUSALEM

<http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/visiting/sites/korczak.html>

KORCZAK HOUSE IN JERUSALEM

<http://jerusalem-korczak-home.com>

KORCZAK IN CANADA

www.sfu.ca/~sapol/korczak

IN POLISH

THE JANUSZ KORCZAK ASSOCIATION OF POLAND

<http://www.psk.prv.pl>

<http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/I/IH/korczak.html>

A very representative source is the site of the **JANUSZ KORCZAK LIVING HERITAGE ASSOCIATION IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN**

<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/KORCZAK/default.htm>

It has info on the Association and its founder, Misha Wasserman Wroblewski

THERE ARE ALSO SOME SOURCES AND MATERIALS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES:

IN GERMAN, a very well done site with a wide variety of materials is <http://www.janusz-korczak.de/>

There is a biography, bibliography, Korczak's pedagogical views, and an interesting documents in English.

Another one is **JANUSZ-KORCZAK-GRUNDSCHULE DUDERSTADT**

<http://www.janusz-korczak-schule.de/index1.htm>

IN FRENCH, the site of **L'ASSOCIATION SUISSE DES AMIS DU DR JANUSZ KORCZAK**

<http://www.droitshumains.org/korczak/> and

<http://www.aidh.org/korczak>

The site tells about the Association and it's activities; there is a Bulletin that the Association issues. There is a Life of Korczak year by year biography. A part of the site is dedicated to his pioneering

way of education, Bibliographie française de Janusz Korczak and a very representative Links section, especially to French sites.

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY IN FRENCH

<http://www.ge-dip.etat-ge.ch/voltaire/prix/korczak.html>

IN RUSSIAN, the Homepage of Jerusalem Korczak Home tells about this very creative and active community

<http://jerusalem-korczak-home.com/>

IN RUSSIAN, the Homepage of one of the projects of Korczak House in Moscow: **"THE GREEN DOOR", THE EARLY SOCIALIZATION CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS**

www.gdoor.narod.ru

IN HEBREW, BIO:

<http://zfat.amalnet.k12.il/007/works/aluma/janush%20kor-chak%20mhneh.htm>

A VERY INFORMATIVE SITE

<http://galim.org.il/korczak/>

IN JAPANESE

<http://www.wakhok.ac.jp/~tukamoto/welcome.html>

Mostly, there are sites or homepages with general information about Korczak - usually a basic bio and a legend. These are useful for a quick reference and a short paper.

Like <http://www.yhca.org.md/J9/Road.html>

JUST ANOTHER BIO:

<http://www.yhca.org.md/J9/Road.html>

by G.E. Farrel - **KORCZAK AND THE CHILDREN**

http://www.janusz-korczak.de/korczak_and_the_children.html

For more serious research, you may want to visit a

BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE:

http://english.gfh.org.il/korczak_bibliography.htm

<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Palms/4559/bibl.htm>

MULTIMEDIA LEARNING CENTER

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/pages/t040/t04071.html>

And last, but not least - you can always find Korczak on **AMAZON.COM** - books, movie:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/6302817536/002-6532198-6053620?v=glance> or at Indigo/Chapters: <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/>

Needless to say, there are search engines such as google.com, and if you want to dive into a randomness of Korczak's legacy presented on the Internet, just print **KORCZAK** in the search field <http://www.google.ca> and enjoy your journey.

Compiled by Maria Breitner

You know more? Please send it to us!