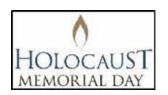
Janusz Korczak: hero of the Children



Set-up the world's first national newspaper for children by children.

Ran orphanages that were democratic, based on children making decisions.



Ran a democratic orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Wrote, broadcast & campaigned for children's rights.

Died, with his children, in Treblinka Concentration Camp.

UN Charter of Children's Human Rights based on his work.

Year of the Child, 1978, named after him.



Learn how his Children's courts were run, Town Hall, Thursday 26th January 10:30-2pm. Workshop run by George Green's School Students and Michael Newman based on resources created in partnership with Jewish Museum. Exploring children's courts and restorative justice.

Janusz Korczak (1878 - 1942)

He gave up a career of being a wealthy and highly respected doctor to look after orphans and street children.

He became famous throughout Poland as a writer of books on children and children's stories.

He broadcast on national Polish radio a programme for adults and children about health and medicine.

He set-up and helped run the world's first national newspaper for children and written by children.

He wrote a charter of children's rights that has influenced the United Nations every since.

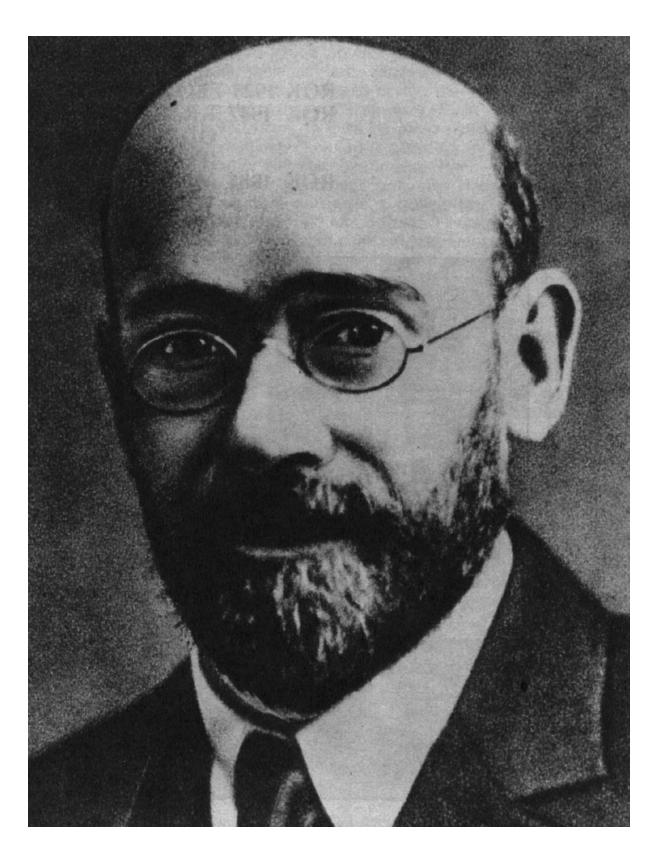
He believed children should be respected as human beings and not treated as tomorrow's citizens.

He represented children in the courts of Poland.

He ran orphanages that were democratic and based on children's rights.

He has been compared to A.S.Neill and his orphanages to Summerhill School.

He died with his children, executed by the Nazis, he could have saved himself but would not leave the children.



Janusz Korczak (picture taken between 1935-37), the United Nations named the centenary of his birth, 1979 the Year of the Child.

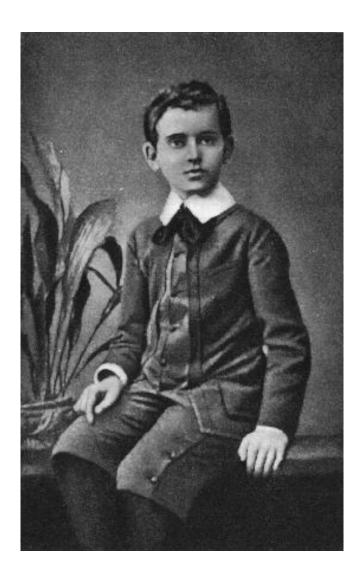
Children Learning about the Countryside.



Children from Krochmalna 92 orphanage at the front of the main building at Rozyczka camp.

The orphans spent several weeks every year at this spot. 1932-33. Children sitting in the first row, from left (5) Jonos Baler, two rows behind him (half-standing) Gershon Mandelblat. Boys standing, from left (2) Herman Nusbaum, (3) Jakubek Dodjuk. Women standing, from the left (5) Saba Lejzerowicz.

Janus Korczak believed that it was important for the children to go camping in the coutryside away from the streets of the city. To play, to climb trees, to splash in the streams, to run in the fields of grass and flowers...



Janusz Korczak when he was ten, the picture used at the front of his children's story 'King Matt', about a boy who becomes king and rules a country because his parents die. King Matt has to rule the country and overcome his adult advisers and then even tries to set-up a children's government, but his country is attacked and he must go to war...

He wrote: "...I included this photograph because it is important what I looked like when I truly wanted to be a king...."



Children outside the Orphans Home, 92
Krochmalna Street.
Purpose built, it was the most modern orphanage in the country with running hot water, baths, toilets.



Krochmalna 92 before World War II. The Orphans Home, Dom Sierot, Warsaw, Krochmalna (street) 92. The home was built in 1912 by the architect Henryk Stifelman who planned it together with J. Korczak. Korczak had a room the attic.

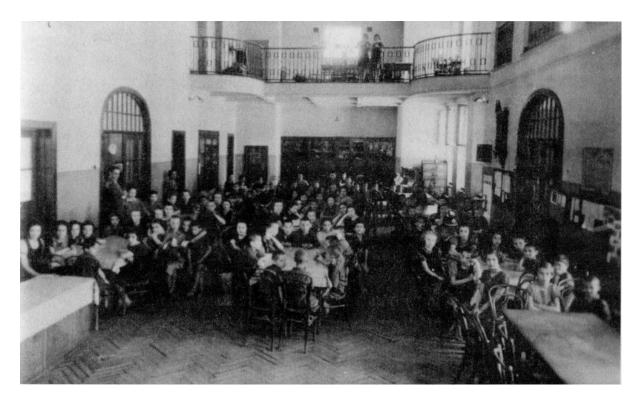
"the child has the right to a Children's Court where he can judge and be judged by his peers."



Children at the Orphanage holding a democratic meeting.

For the court the judges would be children who had not been brought-up that week. To bring-up a child or adult you would tell them and it would be written on the sheet of paper on the noticeboard for the agenda of the meeting.

Away from his orphanages, before the Germans invaded Poland, Janus Korczak acted on behalf of children who were being tried in juvenile court. This is now a regular feature of courts, for the children to have an adult advocate representing the children's views.



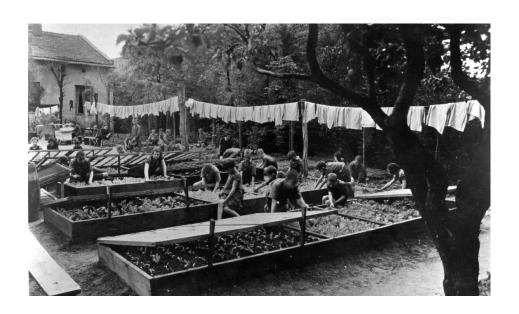
The dining room in the The Orphans Home, Dom Sierot.

"However he considered the children's court of peers the cornerstone of his system, because it would show the children that there could be justice even in an unjust world. Rather than poking someone in the nose because he hurt you, a child could call out "I sue you," and sign his or her name on the list of court cases that were heard each Saturday morning. Five children with no cases against them that week were judges, who followed a Code of Laws that Korczak had drawn up.

"The first hundred articles were based on forgiveness. Only in the most serious circumstances would a child be charged with one hundred or more." Pxvii Ghetto Diary by Janus Koczak, Introduction by Betty Jean Lifton.



"The court is not justice, but it should strive for justice,"
Korczak wrote in the Preamble to the Code. "The court is not truth, but it should strive for truth. Judges may make mistakes. They may punish for acts they themselves are guilty of. But it is shameful if a judge consciously hands down an unjust verdict."



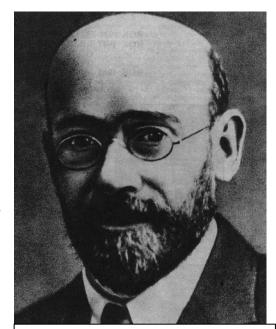
National Children's Newspaper

"Will this world never change? Will the one who suffered yesterday as a deprived child, today, when fully grown, take his turn at the role of oppressor?

"Happiness will befall those future generations who will not forget their own childhood."

A Polish child writing in 'The Little Review'

The Little Review was the world's first national newspaper for children written by children. It was a weekly newspaper in Poland created by Janus Korczak.



Janus Korczak wanted people to read the stories and views of children.

"There are many children who have inventions, remarks and interesting observations, and who do not write because they do not have the courage or the will. Our newspaper will encourage the young to write".

Janus Korczak.

Noticeboards

Korczak thought the ability for children to communicate was vital to his orphanage and ensured there was a central noticeboard, at a height that all children could read. On the board would be teaching notices, advertisements for events, requests, personal messages, items from newspapers, recommended reading, a crossword, a riddle, reports of vandalism and their costs... the items were placed by Janus, the adults and the children.



School Newsletter

He wrote an article about the importance of school newspapers written by the children, and how they helped the community to express and share its news, feelings and dreams. His orphanage had a weekly newspaper that would be read out to the children. This continued even durng the time his orphanage was in the Warsaw Ghetto.

"The paper is the strong link, which joins one week with another, which unites children, the educators and the workers into a single unit." Janus Korczak.

The newspaper...

"Gives courage to the shy and meek, "wipes" the noses of the overcocky, regulates and shapes public opinion — the newspaper serves as society's conscience. Have you a complaint — write to the newspaper; you are angry — write; you accuse me of falsification and incomprehension — fine, let's begin an open debate, show your documents, and know that you cannot deny it later. The newspaper brings the class or the whole school together. It encourages friendships between those who would not even have known each other otherwise; it gives the floor to those who can only express themselves in writing and even in the hottest arguments will never get the right to speak."



Chlodna (street) 33. Picture taken after WWII.

Janusz Korczak moved his orphanage to this building, inside the Warsaw Ghetto. The ghetto was surrounded by a wall, patrolled by soldiers and was a prison for the Jews.

Korczack would sit at his window looking at the soldier on the wall thinking about the cruelty of the treatment of the Jews. His children were starving, as were the people of the Ghetto. He begged for food and support, and even tried to create a hospice, a place for the dying to die with a little dignity, in a bed, holding the hand of someone who cared.

He wrote a diary of the last months of the orphanage, of the children putting on a play by Tagore called the Post Office, continuing to run their children's courts, surrounded by the inhumanity of Nazi rule.

The Warsaw Ghetto

An area of Warsaw was surrounded by a wall with bridges and controlled exits. The Jews in the city were moved into this small area.

Korczak dreamt and wrote of the future, an Olympics with poets

and musicians competing would replace war!

He adds, "I have forgotten to mention that now, too, a war is going on."



Half a million
people were
crammed into
the Ghetto,
without
enough food,
housing or heat.
Many died of
diseases like
typhus, or

starvation and cold. Korczak in hunting for food and fuel would see children playing football in the street and stepping over the body of a dead child.

Moving to the Ghetto

29th November 1940

Korczak gave a great deal of thought to how to relocate the orphanage. He did not want the children to experience going into the ghetto as something fearful, but rather as a new kind of challenge that they would all meet together.

...When Hanna Olczak stopped by, Korczak told her that he wanted to move the household "as if it were a large theatrical troupe." The procession would be like an advertisement for a performance, "a kind of parade in which the children will carry lamps, paintings, bedding, cages with pet birds and small animals."

On November 29th the children lined up in the courtyard as rehearsed, while Korczak inspected the wagons of coal and potatoes. The children said goodbye to the caretaker Piotr Zalewski, who was bruised and swollen from the police beating he had received when he asked for permission to go with the children, he was not Jewish. He had previously been a soldier in the Czar's army.

The children tried to sing as they marched, clutching their few things, and with the green flag of King Matt, with a Jewish star on one side.

On entering the Ghetto the police confiscated the last wagon, full of potatoes.

Arrested and Beaten

Janusz went to the Gestapo headquarters to complain about the confiscation of the potatoes.

The officer was surprised by the sight of Janusz, an angry man in a tattered Polish army uniform, speaking perfect German, introducing himself as Dr Janusz Korczak.

Janusz was offered a chair, but his complaint about the confiscation of the potatoes at the gate to the Ghetto puzzled the German Officer.

"You are not a Jew, are you?" the officer asked.

"I am," Korczak replied.

"Then where is your armband?"
The officer was angry. "Don't you know you are breaking the law?"

Korczak started to explain as he had many times before:



"There are human laws which are transitory, and higher laws which are eternal..." before he could continue the officer ordered him arrested, he was beaten and thrown into a prison cell.

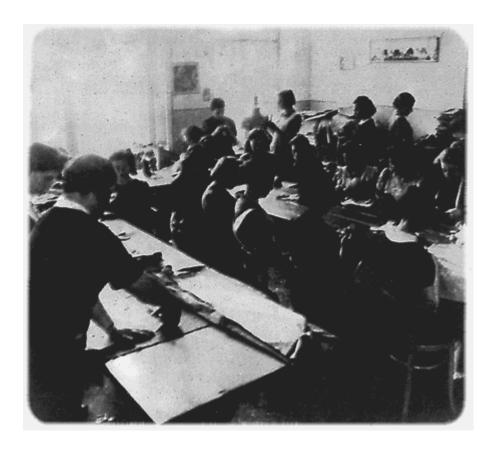
After a month, due to his Jewish and non-Jewish friends a bribe or ransom was paid for his release. He continued to refuse to wear the armband, which every Jew had to wear. The children in the orphanage loved to hear his stories of life and his cellmates in the prison.



The dormitory before the war. The aim was to look after as many children as possible.

"I have weighed and measured a hundred children every week and always with happy excitement. The two hundred grams and quarter centimetre of growth per week these are the growth of spring and the future of life reborn".

In the ghetto he struggled to find food for the children. He tried to create a place where those dying in the streets could die with dignity. He still weighed his children, and watched as they got thinner and thinner...



To try to save the children from being transported out of the Ghetto, to their deaths, Korczak tried to set-up a factory with the children so they would be seen as useful labour.

"Introduction of the principles of self-government had to become, in Korczak's opinion, a significant characteristic of pedagogical work with children.

"Together with adults, children are to agree to rules governing the life of the child-care institution, and then see to it that the rules are followed. Self-government of this form, which is truly authentic self-government, was introduced by Korczak in the orphanages with which he worked.

"The children's self-government bodies were a self-government council and a system of arbitration by fellow-inmates. The establishment of rules to be followed by both staff and inmates was an important component of self-government."

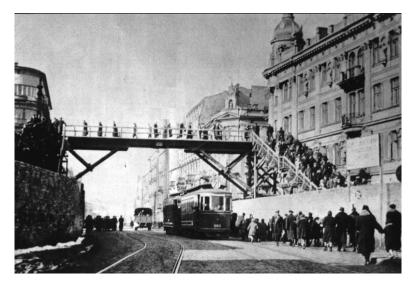


Korczak with children and teachers in Goclawek. Saba Lejzerowicz (on the left side of Korczak) was deported together with Korczak and 200 children from his orphanage, in cattle railway cars to Treblinka. Misza Wroblewski (on the right of Korczak) survived deportation on 5th of August 1942 thanks to the work outside the ghetto that he carried out that day.



Walking to the Trains and Treblinka

This eyewitness gives the last account of Korczak seen alive, as he walks with the children to the train taking them to the death camp, Treblinka:



"I will never forget that sight to the end of my life. It was a silent but organised protest against the murderers, a march like which no human eye had ever seen before.

The children went four by four. Korczak went first with his head held high holding a child in each hand.

The second group was led by his assistant Stefa. They marched to their death with a look full of contempt for their assassins.



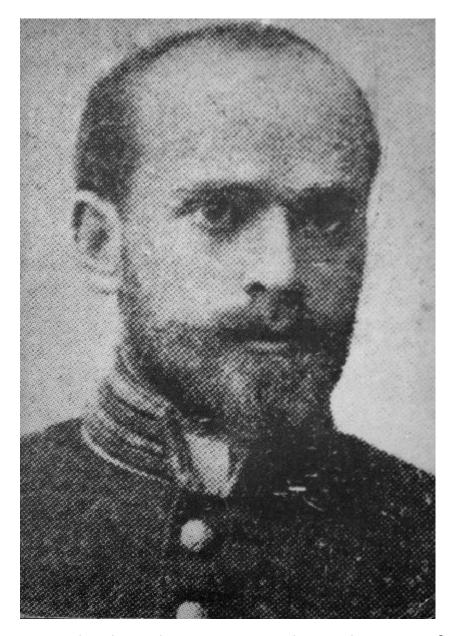
'Who is that man?' asked the German soldiers. I hid the flood of tears that ran down my cheeks with my hands. I sobbed and sobbed at our helplessness in the face of such murder".

The Memorial

Korczak himself did not survive. On 6th August 1942, the 200 children in Korczak's orphage were deported to the Treblinka concentration camp. Knowing it was a death sentence, people twice smuggled false papers to Korczak so that he could escape, but he refused to abandon his charges.



Today at Treblinka a memorial stands consisting of 17,000 rocks representing the lost Jewish communities. Only one is inscribed: it says simply "Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit) and the children"



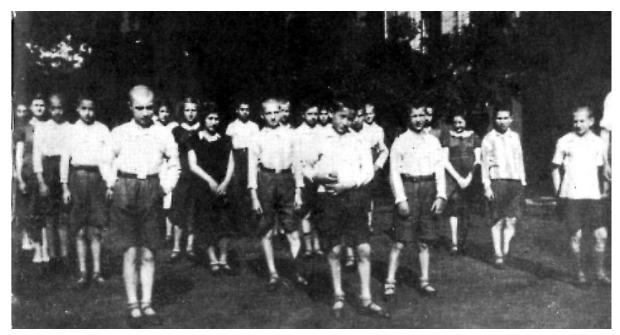
Korczak as a medical student, wearing his military uniform.

1894 - 1904

Studies medicine at the Children's Hospital in Warsaw. Starts to provide aid and care to street children in the poor district of Warsaw. After promotion to Doctor he works in the Children's hospital.

1904 - 1906

Conscripted as a military doctor in the Japanese Russian War.



The Orphans Home, *Dom Sierot*, Warszawa, Krochmalna (street) 92. Children exercising in the morning, 1932.

1906

Returns to Warsaw. Finds fame as an author with the success of his book 'Child of the Salon'.

1906 - 1911

Continues his work as a doctor in the Children's Hospital. Medical students from all over Poland attend his popular lectures. Continues medical studies in Berlin, Paris and London, specialising in paediatrics. Becomes a highly respected doctor to the rich, to provide income to support his duties to the poor.

1911

Gives up a successful medical practice to become Principal of the new Jewish orphanage in Warsaw, built to his design. He puts his ideas on education and children's rights into practice with Stefa Wilczynska, who becomes his closest associate for the next 34 years.



Korczak with children and teachers in front of Dom Sierot orphanage.

1914 - 1918 World War I

Conscripted as a Military doctor. 'How to Love a Child' is written and published.

1918

Returns to work at the orphanage. Sets up a Polish Catholic orphanage in Warsaw with Maryna Falska. 'When I am Little Again' and 'Alone with God' are published.

1922

Writes 'King Matt the First', his famous children's book.

1926

First publication of the popular weekly newspaper 'The Little Review' written and edited by children for children and distributed all over Poland.



Wawrzyn akademicki otrzymał Janusz Korczak (dr. Henryk Goldszmidt).

1933

Awarded the prestigious Silver Cross of Poland for contributions to society. Travels to Palestine. Broadcasts weekly on the Polish State radio under the pseudonym 'The Old Doctor', giving advice on childcare.

1939 World War II

1940

The orphanage is forced by the Nazis to move to the Warsaw Ghetto.

August 5th 1942

Refusing countless offers to save himself, he and his children are deported to the gas chambers of Treblinka.

Chronology Janusz Korczak (1878 - 1942)

1878

Born 22 July in Warsaw as Henryk Goldszmit to Cecylia and Joseph Goldszmit. Father was a respected lawyer.

1896

First publication as a pupil in high school. Father dies in psychiatric clinic.

1898

Wins prize in a literary contest under the pseudonym Janusz Korczak the name he keeps for the rest of his life.

1894 - 1904

Studies medicine at the Children's Hospital in Warsaw. Starts to provide aid and care to street children in the poor district of Warsaw. After promotion to Doctor he works in the Children's hospital.

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1979

UNESCO declares 'The Year of the Child' should also be named 'The Year of Janusz Korczak' to mark the centenary of his birth.