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Summary

In the present text we outline selected biographical data from the life and activity of a Polish-Jewish pedagogue, author and paediatrician, Janusz Korczak. Referring to fragments of his pedagogical texts and autobiographical writing we attempt to present the Korczak idea of children's rights (also on the basis of selected articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). In the final part of the text we make an attempt at indicating why Korczak's educational legacy is relevant to contemporary everyday reality.

Janusz Korczak and Children's Rights

"I took a vow to uphold the child and to defend his rights,
but all that I can offer is a prayer or wishful blessing to support his insecure steps".¹

Korczak's connection to the Convention and selected biographical data

Janusz Korczak, a Jewish-Polish author, doctor and educator, an icon of children's rights, was born in Warsaw and raised as Henryk Goldszmit (1878/9-1942). The name Janusz Korczak was the pseudonym he chose in 1898 at the beginning of his literary career. Among his acquaintances, friends and children Korczak was known as and commonly nicknamed *Mister Doctor* or *Old Doctor*. He came from an assimilated Jewish family and belonged to the circle of progressive Warsaw intelligentsia from the turn of the 20th century.

Between 1912 and 1942, together with Stefania (among friends known as Stefa) Wilczyńska², Korczak ran a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw, named the House of Orphans (Polish: Dom Sierot) - a position he would keep until his last day (August 5, 1942), and between 1919 and 1939 he participated in the pedagogical management of the Polish orphanage named Our Home (Polish: Nasz Dom). Nasz Dom was a home which was managed by Maryna Falska (Maria Rogowska-Falska)³ in cooperation with Janusz Korczak and Maria Podwysocka. The children who found shelter in the facility were the children of labourers who died at war and social orphans – aid was provided to any child who was in need of help. A child was not only to survive in the home, but also benefit from the conditions of a dignified life. These two care facilities: the House of Orphans and Our Home had their own educational institutions: Peer Tribunal, Self-government Council and Children's Parliament. They constituted a key factor in children's education and self-education as through participation – children's active involvement in everyday activities (working time, study time, leisure time, decision making time) they channelled their development and shaped a young person's personality.

Korczak, J. 1936. The King of Children, Letter to Joseph Arnon, Lifton B.J: 211.¹

More: Stefania Wilczyńska in : Puszkina, B., Ciesielska, M. 2004. Słowo do dzieci i wychowawców, Warszawa: Korczakianum.² Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Badań – oddział Muzeum Historycznego m.st. Warszawy; Kicińska, M. 2015. Pani Stefa. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarne.

Maria Rogowska-Falska was a teacher, pedagogue and social activist. In 1919 she established a model orphanage³ and Educational Institution "Our Home" in Pruszków (near Warsaw). On 14 April 198 the Yad Vashem Institute awarded her posthumously with the title "The Righteous Among The Nations". More: Gutman, I. 2009. Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holokaustu. Polska (cz. I). Kraków: Fundacja Instytut Studiów Strategicznych: 162.



Korczak was not only an educator and author, he fulfilled a number of other roles which were important for the development of children's rights and the attitude to children. He is world-renowned as a thinker, social campaigner, pedagogue, educator, paediatrician, essayist, talented author of books for children and youth, scholar, diagnostician, humanist and activist. As a physician Janusz Korczak cared for the orphans' physical well-being, weighed and measured them and gave them medication. Seeing the deeper wounds related to broken families, poverty and other social ills, he redefined the very concept of health care. In the course of his work, he developed his talents as a medical doctor, teacher but also as an author and therapist to support children and promote their rights.

Korczak's literary legacy- *an author who wrote for children and about children* – is profuse. The key work which allows, to a degree, to understand Korczak's activity is the "*Diary*", written in the ghetto in 1942 (published in 1958). *The Old Doctor* included his pedagogical views in the tetralogy "*How to love a child*" (1920), the book "*The child's right to respect*" (1929), and a number of other publications, among others, "*Educational moments*" (1919), "*Rules of life*" (1930), "*Playful pedagogy*" (1939). Among the best known works are those addressed to children: "*Moški, Joski i Srule*" (1909), "*Józki, Jaśki i Franki*" (1910), the duology about King Matt: "*King Matt the First*" (1922), "*King Matt on a desert island*" (1923), "*Bankruptcy of Little Jack*" (1924), "*When I am little again*" (1925). Korczak's literary output encompasses also social novels: "*Children of the streets*" (1901), "*Child of the Drawing Room*" (1906), a moral satire: "*Fiddle-faddle*" (1905), poetic prose: "*Alone with God*" (1922), drama works: "*Madmen's senate*" and many other. Korczak was also an associate in many journals where his texts devoted to children's pedagogical, educational and social problems appeared. He published, among others, in the following journals:

"Głos", "Przegląd Społeczny", "Czytelnia dla wszystkich", "W słońcu", "Szkoła Specjalna". In 1926 he launched the first and unique magazine for children "Little Review". It was a publication edited together with children (in print since 1939), read by children and adults.

In his pedagogical career he implemented many values revealed in his respectful treatment of children and people in general, in choosing between good and evil, caring for the weak, and showing responsibility towards others. "I have chosen the child as the subject of my work"⁴ – as Korczak wrote in his diary. Drawing special attention to children's unequal position in the society, he attempted to emancipate them. He demanded a recognition that a child is a full human being since the moment of birth, at each stage of his or her existence. He argued that a child has a right to be himself or herself. Following his observations of children's position and being in the world governed by adults, one which is based on the laws created by adults and which does not respect the children's voice, Korczak confides in a letter to his friend Joseph Arnon:

"For many years I have been looking at sensitive children, at their helplessness and silent sorrow, and at the insolent dance of the beasts of prey. I fear, that this is but a senseless destruction of all that is good and pleasant – the devouring of the lambs by the wolves."⁵

It must be indicated that Korczak was not alone in his endeavours. Wherever he worked he was always accompanied by a team of caretakers, educators, pedagogues, doctors who followed a common goal: to provide children with support and aid based on respect and listening to their voices. Stefania Wilczyńska⁶, Korczak's associate who remained in his shadow for years, was an exceptional figure. Stefania Wilczyńska⁷ had a significant and direct influence on Korczak: "As to his inseparable

Cited in: C. Skibiński, Dr Korczak i Pan Goldszmit in: UKŁADANKA. Janusz Korczak a współczesność: pasujące ⁴ elementy, Stocznia: 15.

⁵ Korczak J. (November 27, 1933), The Gate of Light, Adir Cohen, Letter to Joseph Arnon, p. 44.

More: Kicińska, M. 2015. Pani Stefa. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarne. ⁶

More about the character and activities of Stefania Wilczyńska in the book edited by Barbara Puszkina and Marta ⁷ Ciesielska - Stefania Wilczyńska. Słowo do dzieci i wychowawców published in 2004 by Korczakianum Centre for Documentation and Research.



The Korczak Education Center in the spirit of Janusz Korczak and Stefa Wilczyńska

companion Stefa – she was devoted to him with all her soul. She adored and took care of him, even of his attire. She did not spare her life for him. For this reason her influence on Korczak was immense. Without Stefa he would have been nothing – as he once told his friend. She was the Manager of The House of Orphans and accompanied Korczak until the end. She realized his pedagogical concepts, day by day, with great conviction and disappointment that he never became a Noble Prize winner”⁸.

Korczak and Wilczyńska – who cooperated throughout their lives - developed and implemented an educational approach that respected the child, placing him/her with equal rights to those of adults. For thirty years Korczak wrote, educated and developed an educational approach based on the concept of the child as a person. He carried the child's voice in every possible way, in books ostensibly written for children but which were really aimed at adults, parents and educators. In those days, this approach was not acceptable to the general public, and certainly not in pedagogy where the child was not to be seen – but was more of an object expected to be obedient as it was believed that only they, adults, know what is best for the child.

Together with Stefa Wilczyńska and in partnership with the children, Korczak developed "A Children's Republic". Korczak and Wilczyńska produced the basis for a different way of thinking concerning the place of the child in a society, a respectful approach that took into account the right conditions for growth so that the child would grow to become "a useful citizen in a society." This pedagogical approach was based on various forms of children's self-government – it respected the child's needs and aspirations, and at the same time it prompted children to work on themselves and motivated them to become active and independent.

Korczak saw the importance of child-friendly learning methods, arguing that ethics was more important than pure facts. He introduced a democratic spirit in the orphanage in which the children themselves had a say in the decisions – but also had to carry the burden to ensure that the decisions were enforced. This “children's republic” had a parliament and a newspaper. Among his best-known initiatives is his experiment with the system of justice. A constitution was written in the orphanage and a peer's court established among the children who dealt with alleged injustices. Such a Court of Peers became a fundamental and characteristic feature of the Korczak method of children's self-government. He aimed above all at creating an institution supremely educational, obliging the children to think and reflect, so that in self-criticism they might better understand both themselves and their peers in the light of their respect for the laws of a friendly community.

At the court, any child could "sue" a person or persons (peer or adult) who had behaved in a bullying manner, who had unsatisfactorily completed their chores, who had cheated when playing, who had taken things without permission or who had broken other rules. Judgments were made according to a code of laws of which the first 99 paragraphs stressed forgiveness. Two educational systems were juxtaposed one alongside the other. The first system respected children's rights while the other (the school system) did not.

"If I devote a disproportionately large amount of space to the court, I do this in the conviction that the court can contribute to children's equality, can prepare the way for a constitution, can force a declaration on the rights of children. Children possess the right to have their problems dealt with seriously and thought through in a just manner. Until now everything has depended on the teacher's goodwill, good or bad mood. The child has lacked the right to protest. This despotism must come to an end."⁹

Korczak believed that the question of children's rights should be understood as a fundamental democratic issue. He placed emphasis on communication, on dialogue between the children, and between children and adults. The goal of the Court of Peers was in a way to create a "communicative

I. Pyrzyk, *Rozwój teorii i metod polskiej pedagogiki opiekuńczej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja ⁸
Kopernika, Toruń 2006/2007, p.113.

⁹ Wollins, M. 1967, *Selected Works of Janusz Korczak, How to Love a Child*: 454.



justice". Mutual respect cannot be sustained if children do not have the right to be heard. In the educational communities of Janusz Korczak, communication was given high priority. (In his books for children, newspapers produced and written by children for children, and broadcasting for children where they could be heard.)

The credo of education is to be found in- as expressed by Maryna Falska: "Not Words, not moralizing – rather such a structure and atmosphere that the children may set a high value on their presence here, may make supreme efforts to correct their failures and to adapt themselves to the expectations and requirements of the community."¹⁰

Korczak's demands for children's rights were not limited to the orphanages managed by him or to the city of Warsaw or Poland. When calling to the general public Korczak writes:

"We are not magicians – we do not want to be charlatans. We disclaim hypocritical nostalgia for wonderful children. Our demands: Remove the hunger, the cold, the dampness, the narrow mindedness, the congestion, the over-population ... Respect, if not humility, toward the white, bright, and unquenchable holy childhood."¹¹

Korczak's book "King Matt the First"¹² was written in 1923. In the very same year (1923) the League of Nations was preparing the declaration on the rights of the child which Korczak found to be patronizing and lacking in understanding of the real situation of children. He argued for a clear distinction between charity based on feelings of pity, and the acceptance of children as right holders. Though King Matt failed, mainly because of adult treason, his intentions and instincts were sound. The rights and democracy for children requires attitude changes among adults, which is one of Korczak's main messages.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the League of Nations in 1924 was not favoured by Korczak who was the first and most radical campaigner for children's rights. Korczak wanted rights - not charity – and rights now, not in the far future:

"Children, individuals who are people, not people to be, not people of the future, not people of tomorrow, but people now, right now, today."¹³

There is an increasing awareness of the individual rights of children based on the understanding that each child is unique and has an inherent value as a human being. This awareness is articulated in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is the first international treaty to recognize the civil and political rights of children. It entitles children to be heard and their views to be taken seriously (Hammarberg, 2007).¹⁴

Articles of the Convention we will relate to

Let us look at Article 12:

1. "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.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a
- 3.

¹⁰ Wollins, M. 1967, Selected Works of Janusz Korczak, Introduction by Igor Newerly: 36.

¹¹ Korczak, J. 1992. The Child's Right to Respect. University Press of America: 186.

Korczak's novel - King Matt the First - is an icon of Polish literature for children. The book became a popular read ¹² among children in Poland; translated into many foreign languages, it is also known in a number of countries around the world.

¹³ Wollins, M. 1967. Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. How to Love a Child: 254.

Hammarberg T. 2007, "The Child's Right to Respect, Janusz Korczak", Council of Europe Publishing: 82.¹⁴



4. representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law”.

Article 12 is most significant. You cannot educate or raise a child, if you do not hear, do not listen, do not give tools and ways of expression, if you do not have a meaningful dialogue with a child.

With regard to this, developing different tools and surroundings where youngsters can develop and draw attention to their needs seems to be the basis for their ability to express themselves in an adult environment. Korczak draws attention to this fact in the following words: "Respect for the present moment, for today. How will he manage tomorrow, if we do not allow him a conscious, responsible life today. Respect for every single instant, for it passes never to return, and always take it seriously; (...)."15

Further, article 12 provides that we must focus on a child's capacity to form a view and not solely on their capacity to communicate those views. It provides that children have a right to express views freely through a medium of their choice which enables them to communicate their views freely and to the best of their ability. Article 12 sets no arbitrary age for the determination of capacity. It simply provides that those children capable of forming a view should be provided with an opportunity to express it. This provision highlights the uniqueness of every child and it requires that we adopt an inclusive approach to participation which respects diversity and facilitates the recognition of a child who is capable of forming a view.

Emily Logan, the Ombudsman for children of Ireland shares the ways in which adults can demonstrate to children that they are really listening during and through the process of participation:

- ✓ giving children enough time to share their views
- ✓ conducting a dialogue with children that involves answering their questions and asking them questions in return
- ✓ being open to critical comments that children may have
- ✓ giving young people direct access to adults in positions of authority
- ✓ trying to understand why a child holds a particular view, that is, not only finding out what a child thinks, but also seeking to understand why.¹⁶

Janusz Korczak's message was primarily about respect for children, respect for their inherent value as human beings but also for their capacity and competence. This trust characterized the daily life in his house for children. All children had a say in the running of the house, they all had responsibilities and duties and monitored their own work and progress.

Article 12 legitimizes children's participation in decision making. In a lecture given in Warsaw in 2007 Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, stated as follows: "The child's ability to form and express an opinion is also dependent on the fulfilment of several other rights in the Convention, such as the right to education and the right to participate freely in cultural life. Also highly relevant are the freedoms of expression, thought, conscience, religion and association as well as the right to privacy. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has designated Article 12 as one of the general principles of the Convention, which means that it should guide the interpretation of the other articles and be of relevance to all aspects of the implementation of the Convention."¹⁷

"During a get-together in the forest, for the first time, I spoke, not to the children but with the children. I spoke not of what I would like them to be but of what they would like to and could be. perhaps then, for the first time, I found out that one could learn a great deal from children, that they make, and have

¹⁵ Wollins, M. 1967, Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. The Right to Respect: 489.

¹⁶ Logan, E. 2008. Building a Europe for and with Children, The Child's Right to Respect, Janusz Korczak. Council of Europe Publishing: 53.

Hammarberg, T. 2007. The Child's Right to Respect, Janusz Korczak. Council of Europe Publishing: 82. ¹⁷



every right to make demands, conditions, reservations."¹⁸ The fragment above shows that Korczak practiced dialogue in his everyday contact with children. He opened the world of adults to children, and through this – the world of children to adults. In this attitude to children he tried not to violate the mutual right to freedom of speech and the right to remain silent. As an educator he entered into a dialogue-based contact with children. He worked, accompanied, was present, talked, taught, played, joked, discussed, listened, answered. He was authentic by filling the children's everyday reality with the practice of co-participation in their development and by supporting this development.¹⁹ Through this he indicated that an educator should always adapt his or her approach and activities to the particular conditions and particular children remaining in certain, defined situations and contexts.

Another important question in Korczak's pedagogy, related to children's everyday reality, was the concern for their best interests. The best interests principle is set out in **Article 3** of the Children Rights Convention:

1. "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, (...) and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.
3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, (...).²⁰

For the first time, states were obligated to ensure that children's interests are placed at the heart of government and of all decision making which impacts on children."²¹

The basic premise of the CRC, taken as a whole, is the application of its provisions with the best interests of the child constantly in mind. The best interests principle governs how we go about decision making with regard to children and is a legally binding rule that states must follow. A child capable of forming a view on his or her best interests must be able to give it freely and it must be taken into account. (Article 12) Parents have primary decision-making responsibility on behalf of their children but, if they fail to make the child's best interests a basic concern, the state may intervene to protect those interests. (Articles 5; 18)

Korczak argued that "One should learn to know the child well so that in granting these right as few mistakes as possible will be made."²² For children's rights are peculiar and following these rights cannot be limited merely to recognizing the child as a human being. It should also consists in providing such conditions for his or her maturing and social and psychophysical development which are the consequence of the peculiar features of childhood.

Such a right is discussed in **Article 31 – The child's right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities:**

¹⁸ Wollins, M. 1967, Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. Summer Camps: 345.

More: U. Markowska-Manista, E. Dąbrowa, The Need of Dialogue in School Class according to Janusz Korczak ¹⁹ [in:] P. Jaros (red.), Janusz Korczak Year. An International perspective on Children's Rights and Pedagogy, a selection of lectures presented during the Korczak seminars organized by Polish diplomatic missions abroad in 2012, MSZ, Warszawa.

²⁰ Convention on the Rights of the Child Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49 <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Logan, E. 2008. Building a Europe for and with Children The Child's Right to Respect, Janusz Korczak. Council of Europe Publishing: 50.

²² Wollins, M. 1967. Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. The Child in the Family: 129.



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1. “States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”²³

Korczak was aware that the period away from the city and spent in nature was important for the physical and spiritual progress of the youngsters: "I wanted to make the four-week stay at the camp a ribbon of bliss and happiness, without a single tear, for the children from basements and attics."²⁴

In their free time children can develop their capabilities, desires, can dream and can even think about their self-development: "What an easy and grateful job! You have under your care thirty out of a total of a hundred-fifty children, and no program whatsoever. You can do whatever you please. Games, bathing, an excursion, a story — complete freedom of initiative. The housekeeper provides board, fellow teachers give a helping hand, the servants see to it that everything is trim and clean, the countryside will present you all with fine surroundings, sunshine, benign smiles."²⁵

Out in the nature, they learn: about themselves and their surroundings, learn to be alone and learn how to behave within the framework of a group. These are essential requirements for anyone who is maturing. Spending time in the nature for the anguished children who Korczak served, the children who grew up in the industrial suburbs of greater Warsaw, was a salvation from the walls that engulfed them and was important from a medical and educational perspective of the child.

"It is astonishing how a boy of twelve, separated from the family, finding himself in strange conditions, under strange supervision, among new peers, experiences no constraint or embarrassment, and even on the first day, demands, resists, protests, plots, picks his associates, wins over the passive and uninventive ones to his side, appoints himself dictator, and resorts to demagogic slogans."²⁶

Janusz Korczak and Stefania Wilczyńska took the children to Summer Camps in the winter and in the summer. At these camps the children developed physically through the sport games they played, sailing and spending time in the forest. This break changed the children, liberated them from the pressures of their life in the city, enabled them to smile and to see a brighter world.

There is another question which seems important and which we wish to accentuate. Despite the legislative protection of children’s rights, despite a number of legal tools which we have at our disposal to protect children, we can see in the contemporary world a number of aberrations and failures in the field of child protection against psychological and physical harm inflicted by adults. There are countries where adults have aggressively opposed children's participation in the name of parents' rights or traditional or religious principles. To change such entrenched patriarchal, but also systemic attitudes towards children may take some time. How can this issue be raised in a meaningful way? How can it be shown that there is no contradiction between giving children the possibility of influencing their lives and society, on the one hand, and safeguarding the role of adults to care for, guide and protect children on the other? Below we present several illustrative steps proposed by Thomas Hammarberg:

²³ Convention on the Rights of the Child Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49:

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

²⁴ Wollins, M. 1967. Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. Summer Camps: 331.

²⁵ Wollins, M. 1967. Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. The Boarding School: 332.

²⁶ Wollins, M. 1967. Selected Works of Janusz Korczak. Summer Camps: 360.



- ✓ Children's primary arena is the home. Raising awareness among parents and caretakers about a child's right to be heard, and helping them cope with their parenting roles in this respect, must be priority.
- ✓ The other key arena is the school and kindergarten. Interactive learning, relevant curriculums and democratic attitudes and procedures are essential contributions. Such measures should focus on strengthening children's ability to express themselves, to handle democratic processes and to understand society and its problems better. A huge task ahead is capacity building among teachers and school staff on how to listen to children, enhance dialogue and promote conflict resolution in a democratic manner.
- ✓ Children's organizations advocating for the realization of children's rights could be promoted, and other NGO's working with or for children, such as sports clubs or charity groups, could be encouraged to listen to children and respect their views.
- ✓ Political parties should be encouraged to develop their capacity to consider children's views and enhance children's influence in political affairs.
- ✓ Television, radio and the press should have "child-friendly" news presentations and make sure that children's views are presented on matters of special concern to them. Budgetary support could be considered for media productions by children and for Internet access and the construction of web pages on themes children themselves choose to highlight.
- ✓ Steps should be taken to make the justice system child-friendly. The court procedures must be adjusted to meet the needs of children, be they perpetrators, victims or witnesses. Children should have an influence on administrative or judicial decisions relating to themselves, for instance on custody care and adoption.
- ✓ Governments should define issues which have great impact on children's lives and on which they therefore ought to have a say, for instance family policies, the planning of community facilities, school policies, children's health care and recreation services. They should identify meaningful ways to take children's views into account and ensure that they are representative and relevant. Channels of expression should be explored which are adequate for different age groups, including young children, such as dialogues with pre-schoolers, school councils, opinion polls, representatives and other models. Special measures should be taken to enhance the voice of groups of children with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups and explore how to overcome possible constraints.²⁷

These steps would be in line with the vision of Janusz Korczak. Enabling children to express themselves and have their views heard and respected in the home, in the school and in the community from an early age will enhance their sense of belonging and their readiness to take responsibility.

Why Korczak's educational legacy is relevant to contemporary everyday reality

“All the ideal and principles which we profess have only such value as we impart to them by our personal life.”²⁸

There can be no doubt as to the relevance of the topics that Korczak raises and this is just from a momentary glimpse, into the partial wealth of his writings. Korczak understood the world of the child, he thought in terms of children from within the understanding of an adult, from a deep understanding of the needs of children, the needs that have not changed to this very day in the 21st century. It is

²⁷ Hammarber, T. 2007. *The Child's Right to Respect*, Janusz Korczak. Council of Europe Publishing: 89-90.

²⁸ Wollins, M. 1967, *Selected Works of Janusz Korczak*. Introduction by Igor Newerly: 17.



confirmed in his words: “Years of work have confirmed for me more and more clearly that children deserve respect, trust and kindness, that it is pleasant to be with them in a cheerful atmosphere of gentle feelings, merry laughter, an atmosphere of strenuous first efforts and surprises, of pure, clear, and heart-warming joys, that working with children in such an atmosphere is exhilarating, fruitful, and attractive.”²⁹

Still today, in his pedagogical heritage: “The Diary”, the literature for children and youth, his books: “How to love a child”, “Child of the Drawing Room” and many other, Korczak shows the paths to an open dialogue conducted with a child in the atmosphere of partnership. He points at the need to shape the conditions of agreement and a new face of upbringing, adapted to the reality of our times and the changes which the future holds.

Korczak’s pedagogy and pedagogics, both in axiological, ideological and methodological dimension, are real postulates and alternatives to the contemporary nurture- educational reality, its caretakers, educators – practitioners and theoreticians. Why? Because in the world which is still unfriendly and “not to a child’s measure “, Korczak with his postulates remains an active tribune, patron, ambassador, protector and advocate of all children.

Korczak was among the first who argued that a child is an autonomous person, with his or her own dignity, interests, needs and rights. “There would not be the Convention on The Rights of the Child without his activity and thought. Korczak saw a human being in a child, saw the subjectivity of the child. He left a number of good solutions (...). He left a clear message: children need to be treated seriously.”³⁰

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